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LATE ATTACK

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Church Missionary

PROVING

THAT HIS PROTEST IS IDENTIFIED

LATE EPISCOPAL CHARGES & CLERICAL

AGAINST

THE BIBLE SOCIETY

AND DEMONSTRATING

*The Existence of a Confederacy against
Religion, on the Part of certain of its prelates*

an unworthy
BY A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH

London:

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FOR JAMES BLACK AND SON, TAVISTOCK
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1818.

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P R E F A C E.

THE following pages appear at a moment of critical and peculiar interest to the cause of Religion. Although they are the result of much reflection, they are not offered to the Public without some apprehension that the object of their Writer may be misunderstood by some, and misrepresented by others. He has not, however, been deterred by this consideration from an honest exposition of the feelings under which he has been led to contemplate the recent attack upon the cause, and the advocates, of divine Truth. To those who are of opinion that every thing in the shape of extended discussion and continued controversy ought to be avoided, the Writer would observe, in the language of Lord Bacon, "Neuters
" in contentions are either better or worse than

“either side.” It is for such persons to consider to which of these classes they belong. To those who may be disposed to cavil at some strength of expression which they may discover in the conduct of the following argument, the Author would also observe, in the language of the same illustrious Writer, “Earnest writing must not hastily
“be condemned; for men cannot contend coldly,
“and without affection, about things which they
“hold dear and precious: a politic man may
“write from his brain, without touch and sense
“of his heart, as in a speculation that apper-
“taineth not unto him; but a feeling Christian
“will express in his words, a character of zeal
“and love.” May He who has all hearts in his hand, vouchsafe to accompany the publication with his blessing, and cause it to issue in his glory!

March 14, 1818.

LETTERS TO A FRIEND,

&c. &c.

LETTER I.

DEAR SIR,

I SHOULD have considered the Answer already given by a Member of the Church Missionary Society to the Protest of the Archdeacon of Bath abundantly sufficient, had not the conduct of that Dignitary and his Friends involved certain other considerations, not so immediately affecting the prosperity of that particular Society, as the vital interests of the Church of England itself, and with it, the well-being of the State with which it is connected. So far as the Church Missionary Society is concerned, it appears to me (and I believe to the greater part of the nation) that she has come out from this unhallowed attack with all that increase of lustre which hard rubbing is known to confer upon most solid bodies; and indeed, so far from having either her bulk diminished or her quality deteriorated by the process to which she has been subjected, I have no doubt that Truth itself will be elicited by the friction, and that abundant advantage will be eventually produced from all the mischief which has been meditated; it being constantly found, that as the design of man is to bring evil out of good, so the purpose of the Almighty is to bring good out of evil. I apprehend that the late attack can only be regarded, by those who look at all beyond the surface of things, as one part of a system which has long been in silent operation, but which

waited for a Leader, in order to its more public movements, and that Leader has now been found in the Archdeacon of Bath. The attack upon the Society in question was but one link of a chain, and must not be regarded so much as an insulated act, as the first of a series of other offensive acts of the same nature, provided the sense of the nation be not unequivocally shewn against such interference. The Commander of the forces went out indeed ostensibly as the Champion of the Society for propagating the Gospel in foreign parts, of which however he is shewn not to be a Member; but he could as easily have unfurled a banner or tilted a lance in favour of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge; his arguments for the missionary torpor of one of those Societies, being equally applicable to the missionary inactivity of the other. And as to the Society which has been assailed, it signified as little to this Goliath of Controversy, whether the Church Missionary Society was denounced first, or the Bible Society, provided it could only appear, that persons "distinguishing themselves by the names of Serious Christians and Evangelical Ministers," were engaged in each. The circumstance, however, of the Bishop of Gloucester being found in the Chair of one of those Societies, was too tempting an occasion to be resisted; inasmuch as the same stone which was cast at the Society, would glance off upon that excellent and amiable Prelate, and there would thus not only be a public affront offered by an Archdeacon of the Church to a multitude of persons, whose orthodoxy, to say the least of it, was quite as sound as his own, but there would be the further triumph of insulting to his face a Prelate of such exemplary piety and active usefulness, as could not fail to present a silent reproof to those.

"Who hate the virtue which they cannot reach."

I propose in the present Letter, to inquire into the character of that opposition which has been thus offered by an Archdeacon of the Church of England to a Bishop of

that Church. He charges that Bishop with presiding in the chief city of the diocese over a Society which the Bishop of Bath and Wells *disclaims*. Now to this the reply is very simple. The latter Bishop has by no act whatever *disclaimed* that Society, unless it be said, that his not belonging to it, or declining its Presidentship, is to *disclaim* it; upon which principle, the Bishop of Bath and Wells might as well be considered as disclaiming the Marine Society or the Royal Institution, by not happening to belong to them, or by declining to become their President. Had the Bishop of Bath and Wells either meant to disclaim the Society itself, or to object to its meeting in his diocese, his obvious course would have been, when the Bishop of Gloucester personally invited him to preside over this Society, and informed him its Meeting would take place in Bath, to have expressed his sentiments against the Society and its intended Meeting; but in making no objections, neither the Bishop of Gloucester, nor any other man of common sense, could have dreamt that any objection was felt. The Bishop of Gloucester, accordingly, never suspected (as he has since expressly declared) that any the slightest objection was entertained; and he proceeded upon a conviction, which his venerable Brother has never to this hour suggested that he was mistaken in having adopted—namely, that no objection whatever existed in his mind, either to the Meeting taking place, or to the Bishop of Gloucester presiding over it. Before, therefore, the Archdeacon can shew that the Bishop of Gloucester “thrust his sickle into another man’s harvest,” he must first shew that the other husbandman wished to keep him out of that harvest, and either preferred to reap the harvest alone, or else to have no harvest reaped—suppositions all equally injurious to the Prelate in whose name the Archdeacon professes to have protested. Let the case be reversed, and let us suppose that the Bishop of Bath and Wells had been invited to preach for an Hospital in Gloucester, and to attend a Public Meeting in its behalf;

not to give his support to a religious Society
to that a Church Society in his own Diocese
is on the part of any Bishop ~~it is~~ fact
to disclaim it. What have hostile Societies
I mean to do with the matter?

will any man who is not the victim of prejudice and party contend that, if the Bishop of Bath and Wells had personally invited the Bishop of Gloucester to preside over that Hospital—and had informed him that he was about to preach a Sermon and attend a Meeting in its behalf, he had not done all that Christianity or courtesy demanded of him? And if the Bishop of Gloucester had only declined to become the President of the Hospital, would any man in his senses say that he *disclaimed* the Institution? Further—if he had expressed no single sentiment against the Meeting taking place, would any one have dreamt that he was hostile to its taking place at all; or, if he had not hinted any objection to its being in Gloucester, would the Bishop of Gloucester, or any body for him, have thought it was “thrusting a sickle into another man’s harvest,” if the Hospital had still been founded under the auspices of the Bishop of Bath and Wells, although in another man’s diocese? It is clear then, that we must seek for other reasons of the Archdeacon’s hostility than any want of punctilio in the Bishop of Gloucester; and lest we should be under any mistake on this head, he kindly assigns another reason. The Society, it seems, over which that Bishop was presiding, was “supported in conformity “to the views of a NEW SECT in the Church—a Sect, of “which the adherents distinguish themselves by the names “of *Serious Christians and Evangelical Ministers.*” I believe the Archdeacon will find it impossible to prove that these names are *assumed* by any Members or Friends of the Church Missionary Society, or that they ever distinguish themselves by titles of this nature; but it is most certain, nor do I mean to dispute for a moment, that the public at large has long designated by those names many persons, both in and out of the Church of England, who are earnest in their Religious Profession, and who are either preaching or practising the pure and vital doctrines of the Gospel of Christ. I do not wish to escape from a single difficulty of this part of my subject, and will there-

fore honestly meet the question, by stating some reasons why the characters who have thus attracted the hatred of the Archdeacon, have been designated by the phrases which he has quoted, premising only that I deny *in limine* that these persons themselves form, or are connected with, any Sect in the Church of England; and hope to shew, on the contrary, that they are the only proper and legitimate representatives of that Church, and are the salt, which having long preserved it from corruption, are at this moment, under the great Head of the Church, the instruments who are saving it from destruction.

First, The characters in question maintain, that the actual conversion of every man from a death in sin to a new life of holiness, is essentially necessary to his individual salvation, independently of any external forms of Church Communion, or any system of mere orthodoxy; and that this regeneration of heart and life is not necessarily conveyed by Baptism, however rightly and duly administered; while, on the other hand, multitudes of preachers and laymen assert that Baptism is Regeneration; and that there needs no other; a doctrine, which is equally the fallacy of the Church of Rome, and one of the most fatal delusions into which any visible Church can fall.

Secondly, These characters maintain, in conformity with the Articles and Homilies of the Church, that Conversion is, from first to last, the work of the Holy Spirit of God, irrespectively of man's capacity or merit, which have no place whatever in a Sinner's Justification before God; that such Justification is of Faith alone, and not of Works, in any degree or particular, although it be equally certain, that real faith must ever be accompanied by the fruits of holiness, without which evidences no man's faith can be genuine or sincere; and in default of which no man shall see the Lord;—while, on the other hand, a great variety of persons in the Church of England both teach and believe, in direct contradiction to the Scriptures and the Articles, that we are saved in part by Christ, and in part by our-

selves—that the Saviour does something, and man does the rest; an error which stands at the head of the doctrinal corruptions of the Church of Rome, and is most opposed to the vital doctrine of the Reformation—Justification by Faith only—the *articulus vel stantis vel cadentis Ecclesiæ*.

Thirdly, The persons so denominated serious and evangelical, are those who, upon principles of conscience, renounce and abstain from the vain amusements and sinful pleasures of the world, as opposed to the plain commands of the word of God, and as having a direct tendency to extinguish the life of Christ in the soul of man, and irreparably to injure others by the pernicious influence of an evil example; while, on the contrary, a vast majority of nominal professors, within the pale of the visible Church, are so far from discerning any evil in these things, that they can pass without repugnance from the Theatre to the Church, live in a round of vain and frivolous company, see no harm in consuming whole evenings at the Card Table, and yet expect, with confidence, to be saved by their works,—at the same time that they brand with the reproach of “Methodism” and “preciseness,” those persons who resolve to “live godly in Christ Jesus,” designate them as “Saints” or as “Sectarians,” and consider every approach in others to evangelical piety and seriousness, as so much “fanaticism” or “enthusiasm:” above all, if it should appear that these deluded characters add to their other errors the unpardonable sin of subscribing to the Church Missionary Society or the Bible Society.

Fourthly, Of the persons designated by the Archdeacon as a Sect, it is well known, that such as belong to the Clergy of the Establishment, although constituting a decided minority of that Clergy, are constantly urging in their Sermons the great and vital doctrines of the Bible and the Reformation, such more especially as the following:—1st. The complete apostacy of man from his Maker, and the entire depravity of the human heart. 2d. The utter inability of every man living to turn to God by any inhe-

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rent strength of his own; or to do works meet for repentance, without the previous influence and subsequent co-operation of the Holy Spirit. 3d. The absolute necessity of individual conversion, and that "except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of Heaven;" as also, that Baptism is so far from being necessarily Regeneration, to the invalidating of all other, (as maintained by Dr. Mant and the soi-disant Orthodox Divines in Bartlett's Buildings,) that a vast majority of professors in the external Churches, both of Rome and of England, are no more regenerated by Baptism than Simon Magnus himself was, and evidently prove by their conduct that they need the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit of God quite as much after their Baptism, as Voltaire and Condorcet, or Gibbon and Hume did after theirs. 4th. The indispensable importance of Faith in Christ, throughout the whole of the Christian system, as the appointed medium of a Sinner's Justification before God, and the impossibility of salvation without it; a Faith, not of an historical, but of an influential nature, a Faith which is saving in its operation, and evidenced by its fruits, a Faith which (according to Hooker and all the oldest and best Divines of the Church of England) apprehends the Saviour in all his offices; accepts his blood, as cleansing from all sin, and his righteousness, as imputed to every Believer, and rendering him complete in Christ, and one with him.* 5th. The absolute necessity of a change of life, as well as a change of heart; in other words, of that practical "Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord;" the importance of "crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts," because, "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature;"—whence the evil of Sunday travelling and visiting, of Sunday Newspapers and Parties, of the Theatre occasionally, and the Card Table frequently, as well as the danger of conformity to the world in points still less equivocal in their nature, and still more

* See especially Hooker's Sermon, on Justification.

*The authors description of the society to which
he earnestly belongs, is a decided proof
of his humility*

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awful in their tendency. Themselves men of prayer, of mortified spirits and deep humility, they preach and live as on the verge and confines of the eternal world, addressing their hearers as those who have souls to be saved or lost, and mainly anxious for their best interests, as becomes those who must give account of their stewardship, and make full proof of their ministry: they evince an earnestness in their work, which entitles them to the character of "serious Christians," and they manifest such an acquaintance with the nature of their commission, and such an overwhelming sense of its importance, as acquires for them the title of "Evangelical Ministers." Let us briefly examine the reverse of this picture: the Divines of another School publicly maintain that men are by no means so radically and incurably bad as not to be influenced by the force of moral suasion, by the attractions of virtue, and a sense of the fitness of things,—that many have good hearts at bottom, and that all men possess by nature the power of repenting, of forsaking sin, and of obeying God, if they only determine to do so,—that the necessity of individual conversion is an enthusiastic notion, and the dream of the enemies of the Church,—that a baptized man is necessarily "born again of Water, and of the Spirit," and that there is no other Regeneration than that which is supplied in Baptism, when duly administered,—that Justification is not by Faith only, but by Faith and Works together, and that the latter perform a necessary and essential part in the office of justifying the Sinner in the sight of God,—that all such seriousness and preciseness as the majority of regular Clergymen disapprove and discountenance by their own practice, is to be avoided as savouring of unnecessary strictness, and being either Calvinism or Methodism, or both; and that therefore to object to an innocent game at Cards, frequent absence from Church, a Sunday ride in the Park, occasional attendance at the Theatre, the Ball Room, and the Rout, or, in short, to any other evidences of a worldly life, short of flagitious and notorious sins, would

be the height of uncharitableness, since there is not half so much danger to the Church, in all the above evils put together, as in belonging to the Church Missionary Society or the Bible Society. The decent moralists of the Church of England, who espouse such lax and erroneous notions of doctrine and practice, and who happen at the same time to be the accredited guides of the people in dispensing the sacred mysteries of Religion, studiously keep out of their sermons every topic which may lead men to entertain any doubts about their spiritual welfare or their eternal safety; they "never mention hell to ears polite;" but descant on the decencies and proprieties of virtue; the blessings of a well-spent life, and the reward of upright conduct: the barren ethics of the ancient Heathens, or the lifeless speculations of a "Philosophy falsely so called," are too frequently the only comment which is furnished upon the sublime texts which are selected from the word of God; and not only is there an entire want of spirituality and piety, of feeling and affection, in most of the addresses which issue from our pulpits, but the matter which is substituted in the place of sound doctrine, is really of too meagre and worthless a character to be expected to interest the attention of rational creatures, or even as a question of literary composition, to furnish out the poor repast of an intellectual entertainment; one necessary consequence of which is, that many persons of good sense, who are not impressed by a sense of the duty of attending public worship, silently absent themselves from it, although they still retain too great a respect for the Institutions of their Country, and too great a regard for many of the Ministers of Religion, to avow publicly the motives which influence their conduct in neglecting the public services of the Sabbath. With regard to the higher and more important doctrines of the Gospel of Christ, it is not too much to assert, that such a Gospel is NOT PREACHED: in vain do we look for the awakening appeal to the conscience of a Sinner, the earnest exhortation to "flee from the wrath to

come," the plain declaration that "except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of Heaven," the exhibition of the evil of sin, or the terrors of the law; not only does no feeling exist of the practical necessity of such solemn appeals to the consciences of unrenowned men, but the very necessity itself is more than doubted,—it is plainly denied, and openly branded with the title of enthusiasm, so that those very truths which might alarm the guilty, and awaken the careless, are suppressed by the great majority of the regular Clergy as the dreams of a perverted imagination, which can shew no warrant from the word of God. Men are virtually treated by the bulk of the Established Clergy as either good enough already, or else as needing only a partial and superficial reformation, which is quite within their own reach; and thus the ignorant and the sensual, finding little or nothing in such statements opposed to their own corruptions, and hearing still less of that spiritual change of heart and life which the Holy Spirit alone can effect, continue indeed to frequent their Church, with all the external decency with which, under another form of religion, the benighted devotee attends his Mass, but, like him, without exhibiting any evidences whatever of a renewed heart or an altered life, and still remaining in a state of nature, destitute of the first elements and principles of a state of grace. In either case, persons under such a course of instruction can only be expected to live as they list, and die as they live; the peculiar character of that dispensation, which was intended for the conviction and salvation of Sinners, is not displayed; and so far from its being thought necessary that anguish of heart should ever be felt under a sense of sin, the very supposition of such a state is considered to be rank enthusiasm, and they who would administer to its relief, are proscribed as a Sect, and esteemed as the disturbers of the world.* In

* So great is the ignorance of unconverted Ministers, that it happened not long since, that one of them, who shall be nameless,

reference also to the declaration of divine mercy through Christ, which it is the duty of all Ministers to exhibit and recommend, it is not too much to assert, that the scheme of a full and free salvation by Him who came into the world to save Sinners, is not displayed by the great majority of the Established Clergy, but virtually excluded from their system. The entirety and integrity of the gospel dispensation in the particular of free salvation by grace, without the works of the law, is absolutely denied, or so diluted and explained away as to lose all the distinctness of its character, and all the force of its operation. It is declared of those who maintain such a doctrine, that they are enemies to good works—that they inculcate Antinomian principles, and encourage laxity of practice—a charge which might with equal propriety have been brought against the Primitive Christians, and the first Reformers, and which accordingly was brought by the great Accuser and his Agents against St. Paul himself, who was slanderously reported to have affirmed, that evil might be done, in order that good might come; but who indignantly repels the charge, that the doctrines of grace tended to licentious practice, by that remarkable exclamation, “God forbid! How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”

These doctrines have essentially and necessarily a sanctifying tendency; and if it could even be shewn that in some instances they had been abused by the perverseness of

but who resides at no great distance from Tunbridge Wells, having met with the sermon of a celebrated living Dissenting Minister, (who shall also be nameless,) and being rather pressed for time, preached it in his congregation. A young man happened to hear it delivered, who was sensibly affected by it; and, feeling great anxiety of mind under convictions of sin, applied to the preacher for his spiritual advice. The Clergyman was, however, utterly astonished at the application—lamented exceedingly that any thing he had said respecting sin should have given any concern to his hearer—requested he would not distress himself upon such a subject, and assured him that he had nothing whatever to fear, but might consider himself in a state of perfect safety!

man, this would afford no more reason for the Church of England withholding them from the people, than the circumstance of the Scriptures having been in some instances perverted from its original purposes, will justify the Church of Rome in denying the Bible to the People. Water is still a good thing, and must continue common property, although some men have been drowned ; and so must fire, in spite of the fact that some persons have been burnt. To contend on account of certain consequences with which the pure Gospel of Christ can by no means be made chargeable, that therefore the Gospel of Christ ought not to be preached, is equally incompatible with the will of God, and the wants of man. The *Established Clergy* as a body, unwilling to trust God for the results of his own Revelation, are presenting the public with a defective and partial view of divine truth. Afraid of the exhibition of a full and free salvation, from which human merit is excluded, they have set up in its stead, a legal system under which man, either in whole, or in part, becomes his own Saviour, and have thus made the word of God of none effect by their traditions. The system thus adopted in the place of a better, professes indeed to entertain a great respect for good works ; but we have only to observe the different lives of converted and unconverted persons, whether among the Clergy or the Laity, if we would form a just estimate of the practical influence of their respective professions—we shall soon find that “ serious Christians ” have not obtained that name upon slight pretensions, nor have “ Evangelical Ministers ” been so designated without abundant cause.

I am, &c.

LETTER II.

DEAR SIR,

I BELIEVE we shall find that opposition to the Church Missionary Society, is inseparably connected with opposition to the Bible Society, both being alike the cause of God, and, as such, obnoxious to the worldly and the profane, whether in or out of the Church of England. Among the evils of the present day, there are few more unaccountable in themselves, and more injurious in their consequences, than the steady and determined opposition of the Clergy of the Church of England to the British and Foreign Bible Society. It is no secret, that a great majority of the Established Clergy openly oppose that Society from the pulpit and the press—that certain of her Prelates fulminate against it in their charges—and some of her Archdeacons, at their visitations—that the most unworthy motives are untruly imputed by such reasoners to the friends of the Society, and that the younger Clergy and the Laity at large are constantly exhorted and urged to avoid the Society as a pestilence, and neither to support it by their funds, nor to sanction it by their countenance. Reviews, whose conductors would be deemed exclusively orthodox, echo and re-echo the oft-refuted sentiment, that the Friend of the Bible Society is the Foe of the Church and the State. A certain Society, whose professed object is the promotion of Christian Knowledge, but whose executive department has of late years fallen into the hands of those whose Christian charity by no means keeps pace with their Christian knowledge, deliberately blackballs such persons as are proposed for their Members, when it appears that these persons are already Members of the Bible Society; and

on one occasion in particular, a Reverend Member of that Society, who has written with peculiar virulence against the Bible Society, publicly declared he should vote against an individual then proposed, unless it could be stated that the candidate in question believed that Baptism was Regeneration—a doctrine which had no more connection with the question of that candidate's eligibility, than it had with the Bible itself. In other quarters, opposition to the Bible Society is made the test and criterion of orthodoxy, precisely as opposition to Jansenism once was in the Church of France; and it is sufficiently notorious that one way to ensure preferment in the Church (not excepting the highest class of preferment) at this moment, is to commence a vigorous opposition to the Bible Society. Hence the swarm of silly and ephemeral productions which issue from the press against that Society, the writers of which could with the same facility have taken the opposite side of the question, if there had been an equal probability of advantage by their doing so;* and yet the success of these efforts is really surprising, it being no uncommon event for a living of some consideration to reward the appearance of a literary experiment of this kind, while the sheets are scarcely dry, and even before the sale of the first edition. In cases where the clerical opponent of the Society does not happen to be a Scribe, (I do not impute to him that he is a Pharisee,) the force of his influence is often not less powerful, nor less adversely felt; for so much are the Established Clergy esteemed, that their opinions have a sensible effect upon their Congregations,

* When Louis XIV. was desirous of obtaining the sanction of certain eminent Ecclesiastics to the Bull Unigenitus, nine out of the number opposed his wishes. On complaining of this to his daughter, and stating how much he desired a complete uniformity of opinion, she replied, "Nothing in the world is more easy.—You have only "to order the forty who have approved the Bull, to be of the same "opinion as the nine who have opposed it."

and, indeed, upon all within the sphere of their influence, the great bulk of the population caring but little, and understanding still less, about the merits of this question, and only desiring to know what their lawful Pastor says upon the subject. I should be glad to be informed what the Clergy of the National Establishment promise themselves by this line of conduct. It is clear that popularity cannot be their object, for the cause of the Bible Society being almost universally popular, they who systematically oppose it, can care little about the public opinion. Now, although it must be conceded at once, that popularity is not a certain and infallible test of truth, yet it is at least collateral evidence in its favour, in which respect, perhaps, it resembles common sense, which, as Sir William Temple says, would never have been so common, if it had not been the best sense. At all events, do they consider that an opinion is not wrong, merely because it is popular; and that it may be right, although it happen to be popular? Do the Established Clergy seriously consider that in this country, at least, nothing can be of permanent and certain continuance, which runs directly counter to the judgment and feelings of its Protestant population? Do they consider that by their present opposition, they are making common cause with the advocates of the Romish Faith, who contend (with the Pope at their head) that the Bible "does more harm than good," and therefore is either to be only dispersed in the original languages, or only to be used by persons who have the Priests' Licence for its perusal, and that the Bible Society itself is a noxious and pestilential thing, which ought to be plucked up by the roots? I will venture thus publicly to state, that it is a bad symptom for any Protestant Church, when many of her leading members (who might learn more wisdom from the Church of Russia) are thus found hand in hand with that power which has invariably resisted the free use of the Scriptures, that best and highest triumph of the Reformation. But if the Established Clergy do not promise themselves popu-

larity, is Truth their object, and do they console themselves for the loss of the general esteem, in the belief that they are discharging a positive duty, which will more than indemnify them for the frowns of the nation? Where then, I ask, upon this ground, is their warrant for denouncing the Bible Society? Is it meant to be said (it cannot be proved) that the Bible Society teaches disloyalty or rebellion—that it makes men factious subjects, or bad members of society? Is it meant to be said, that Infidelity of any kind (from Atheism down to Unitarianism) is inculcated by the Bible Society? Why—say the objectors—we do not charge it upon the Society, that it designs any of these evils—religious or political—but only that the necessary tendency of a mixture of Churchmen and Dissenters, is to make Infidels and Traitors. How is it then, that after the experience of fourteen years we witness no such results? Why do Churchmen and Dissenters meet in every other Charitable Institution in the Nation as well as this, without any such consequences? The simple constitution and object of the Bible Society is, to disperse the Holy Scriptures alone, without note or comment; and until it can be shewn that the necessary tendency of the general dispersion of the Scriptures themselves, is to propagate false doctrine, it will not be very easy to shew that false doctrine is, or will be propagated by the Bible Society, consisting, as it does, of some excellent Prelates, many of the Established Clergy, and a multitude of persons of the first rank and consideration in the State. The general and sweeping charges then, which are made against the Society by those who would excuse their own indifference, by condemning the activity of others, is unworthy of a Church which does not stand in need of such defenders. I am well aware that an invidious comparison is sought to be established between the Bible Society and the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge; but I confess, it has ever appeared to me, that there is nothing in this argument. If the old Society, composed as it is, only of Members of the Church of England, and necessarily

excluding all others, could have supplied the world, or even this country alone, to the extent that was necessary, with copies of the Scriptures, something might more plausibly have been urged for one Society keeping the monopoly in its own hands: but when the wants of other countries are considered, and even the present wants of our own, now that both Societies have been so long in operation, will not this consideration more than justify the exertions of the Bible Society? It is further said, that the old Society sells Tracts as well as the Bible. Granted: but are these Tracts never of a nature to discredit the Church they would defend, and to deny the doctrines they should maintain? But she sells the Prayer Book. Admitted: but if the Bible Society does not happen to sell it also, may not all her Church Members procure it elsewhere for distribution at as cheap a rate, and in point of fact, do they not do so, as well as many of her Dissenting Members also, who, though not using the Liturgy themselves, have piety and taste enough to esteem that "form of sound words," and liberality enough to give it to those who use it? But the Bible Society will make people mad after Religion.—Be it so. We all know the reply of King George II. to those who felt indignant at the rising merits of a celebrated officer, who was charged by his enemies with madness. "If this be madness," said the King, "I wish he would bite some of my generals." But, perhaps so many Dissenters distributing Bibles, will make just so many more Dissenters. On this head I am reminded of another story, perhaps not so generally known. "I once observed," (said a well-known character,) "a man sowing in a field, and I asked him what religion he was of: to which he very naturally replied, by asking me what business that was of mine? Why, said I, my reason for asking is, that I am told, if you are a Quaker, what you are sowing will produce a crop of Quakers. If you are a Methodist, it will be followed by a crop of Methodists; but if (as I hope is the case) you are a Churchman, it will produce

“a crop of Churchmen. Why, you fool, (said the man,) “I am sowing Wheat, and don’t you know that Wheat will “appear?” Let this anecdote suffice for an answer to those sagacious reasoners, who imagine that the distribution of the Bible will necessarily create Dissenters; an opinion, by the way, which, as maintained by Churchmen, is not very complimentary to their own profession, since it unwittingly insinuates that the Bible rather favours the cause of Dissent than of Churchmanship; a position which I, as a Churchman, must hesitate to admit. Let those Members of the Establishment, who are at present joining the Friends of Popery, in decrying the Bible Society, recollect that if History be true, this is likely to be a hazardous experiment. Dr. Heylin in his *Life of Archbishop Laud*, observes, in defence of that Prelate’s siding with the Papists, that he did so in the hope of overturning the Puritans by their means. We all know the consequences of this unnatural alliance. It had not the blessing of God upon it, and it came to confusion, involving in its fate, not the Archbishop only, but his Royal Master also.

This nation is now great and free and united, only as the principles of the Reformation have made her so. It is their continued operation alone which will keep her so. The first of these principles is, the right of every Protestant, both individually and collectively, to disperse the word of God; nor has any portion of the Clergy of this country, or any other body of men in it, any right either to prevent his doing so, or to revile and abuse him for it, still less to charge him with motives and designs which he disclaims and abhors, or even to assert (without the possibility of proof) that dangerous and destructive consequences must inevitably ensue from such a beneficent and pious act. The times are past when influence exerted in this unhallowed way will be available. Let certain partisans, in particular, reflect, before it be too late, that they are disgracing the best of causes, and injuring the purest of Churches, by their present impolitic proceedings; and let

those who still entertain some doubt whether the general circulation of the Scriptures will not do "more harm than good," learn to trust God for the consequences of a still more widely-extended distribution of his own word, than it has ever yet had; nor imagine, for an instant, that the moral Governor of the world is either unable or unwilling to provide for the safe and salubrious progress of that stream of eternal life, which he himself has commanded to flow through all the nations of the earth. If, instead of this unhallowed refusal of the Scriptures to the world, certain objectors would for once suspect the sincerity of such a profession of faith, as can contemplate unmoved the wants of so many Millions of perishing Idolaters, and can view them with all the indifference of the Priest and Levite who passed by on the other side;—if, I say, such secular Theologians would begin to doubt the soundness of such a cold and heartless system, as chills and paralyzes their sense of duty to the commands of their Master, and their love for their ignorant and perishing brethren—we might hope for some good results from their attention being drawn to the subject. Such characters should learn to "rejoice with trembling," when they consider that it is not the public profession of the purest faith on earth which can avail those individuals, who, while they are boasting loudly of their exclusive orthodoxy, are individually maintaining opinions which are in direct hostility with the very Articles and Homilies of that Church to which they have vowed allegiance—such, for instance, as that Baptism is Regeneration, and that there needs no other*—that the regular Clergy

* See the Tracts on Baptismal Regeneration, recently published, with the sanction and authority of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and both dispersed and defended by that Society; and also a Sermon lately preached at Bridgewater, entitled, "The Churchman dissuaded from becoming a Member of the Bible Society," and published at the request of the District Committee of the same Society; in which the Preacher, among other matters *ejusdem*

of the Church of England are alone the lawful and competent guides on subjects of doctrine and practice, and of course, the only proper interpreters of Scripture*—that the Bible Society ought not to be supported by Members of the Established Church, and that they who do support it are enemies of that Establishment, and are seeking its overthrow.† Such are among the sentiments which are now openly maintained by many individuals of a Church, of which they alone would be considered as the true Sons, while, in fact, they know not the Mother who has borne them—sentiments which bear a much nearer alliance to Popery than to Protestantism, and acknowledge a common origin with a kindred system of ignorance and error. Such as applaud and reward these and similar opinions, as well as all those who find their account in maintaining them, are prepared at this moment to throw themselves into the arms of Popery, in order to protect themselves and their Church from what they call Calvinism; but although I am neither a Calvinist, nor yet an advocate for Calvinism, I would remind such persons of what was well and wisely said to them by the late Bishop Horsley: “Take heed, (says he,) “before you aim your shafts at Calvinism, that you know “what is Calvinism, and what is not: that in that mass “of doctrine, which it is of late become the fashion to “abuse under the name of Calvinism, you can distinguish

farinæ, distinctly asserts, that “Baptism is that sacred rite in which every true spiritual Member of the Church believes that he was *pardoned*, justified, sanctified, and *glorified*,”—a statement, of which it is difficult to determine whether the Individual who wished such an error to be received as truth, or the Society which determined it should be published as truth, committed the greater absurdity.

* See a Treatise “On Parochial Communion,” by Sykes, and the “Guide to the Church,” by Archdeacon Daubeney.

† See the Charges of the Bishops of Lincoln, London, (late) Llandaff, and Chester, and the Pamphlets of Dr. Wordsworth, the Rev. Mr. Norris, the Rev. Mr. Lloyd, and the Rev. Mr. O’Callaghan, against the Bible Society.

" with certainty between that part of it which is nothing
 " better than Calvinism, and that which belongs to our
 " common Christianity, and the general Faith of the
 " Reformed Churches; lest, when you mean only to fall
 " foul of Calvinism, you should unwarily attack some-
 " thing more sacred, and of higher origin. I must say,
 " that I have found great want of this discrimination in
 " some late controversial writings on the side of the
 " Church, (as they were meant to be,) against the Metho-
 " dists; the authors of which have acquired much applause
 " and reputation, but with so little real knowledge of their
 " subject, that give me the principles upon which these
 " writers agree, and I will undertake to convict, I will not
 " say Arminians only and Archbishop Laud, but upon
 " these principles I will undertake to convict the Fathers
 " of the Council of Trent of Calvinism; so clearly is a great
 " part of that which is now ignorantly called Calvinism
 " interwoven with the very rudiments of Christianity.
 " Better were it for the Church, if such apologists would
 " withhold their services."

Should the Church of England be disposed at this time
 to listen to the suggestions of certain of her advisers, either
 to alienate her best friends within the pale, or to coalesce
 with her greatest foes without the pale, it will not be very
 difficult to anticipate the result. The Church of England
 appears to have but one course of duty and of safety—a
 simple return to her own Protestant doctrines and prin-
 ciples—a more plain and faithful exhibition of them in
 public and private—a decided encouragement and patron-
 age, on the part of those who dispense her honours and
 rewards, of those men who are not merely distinguished
 for an acrimonious and bitter spirit against such as they
 term Sectaries and Saints, or against the Bible Society and
 its Members, nor yet who are merely learned mathema-
 ticians or scientific characters, but who are evidently men
 of unequivocal piety, and personal fitness, who feel the
 solemn responsibility of their charge, and are really in

earnest about the salvation of their flocks. These men will prove the best friends and firmest supporters of the Protestant Church and cause, because they act from principle, and are governed by conscience; nor has the Church of Rome any such foes to fear as these, while she has no alarms whatever from a careless and worldly priesthood like her own. Now, instead of that union of Christian zeal and love which might have been expected in these times, from a Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, we find an attempt made by that Society to identify a junto who direct its concerns, into the accredited and efficient Representatives of the Church of England. That Society is become in fact little else than the Rump of the Convocation; and because these are not times in which Ecclesiastical Convocations are either in fashion, or would be endured, the deficiency is supplied by certain zealots, who would make their own sentiments the criterion of orthodoxy, and their own authority the rule of obedience. The influence thus exerted through the country is of a formidable description, and perhaps not the less efficient, because it does not display itself in public meetings or specific resolutions, since under the cover of secrecy it is rendered less ostensible, and more secure. A vast majority of easy and respectable persons, who are perfectly content to let their lawful superiors in the Church endure the trouble of thinking for them, and who consider themselves bound in conscience to believe all that their Spiritual Guides communicate, connect themselves with such a Society as this, under an impression that it can do no wrong—receive its Tracts as on canonical authority—and never suppose it possible that such grave and learned personages are the subject of human passions and infirmities, and much less that they are likely to fall into any mistakes upon theological matters. When, therefore, persons who are known to be the pillars of such an Institution, (no matter whether pillars of salt out of it,) assure their tractable disciples that they cannot, as Members of the Church of

England, give a Guinea a Year to the Bible Society; much less contaminate their own orthodoxy, by attending its meetings; and more especially when they are informed that there is every reason to doubt of that man's Loyalty as well as of his Religion, who meddles with such igneous materials as the Earl-Street Bibles and Testaments, notwithstanding they have all been printed at the English Universities;—when such alarms, I say, are instilled into the minds of respectable and regular persons, what can be expected, but that such sober and discreet characters should at once receive all this dehortatory theology as so much sound truth, and consider the parties from whom it emanates as worthy of implicit credit? Taking their religion itself upon trust, it is not to be expected that they should institute too rigid an inquiry into the correctness or falsehood of the statements by which their appointed pastors would continue to uphold their own system, and to perpetuate error by the influence of respectable names. The first question naturally asked by a loyal Magistrate, or an opulent country Gentleman, neither of whom happens to be much in the habit of reading his own Bible, is—whether his lawful Pastor thinks well of the Bible Society; and the last question which that Pastor would in a general way think of asking either of the Justice or the Squire, is—whether they or either of them ever read the Bible through in their lives, or know any thing whatever of its first and fundamental principles. If these respectable parishioners are only decent in their exterior, love the Church, and hate the Conventicle, he forms as charitable an opinion of their spiritual safety as of his own; and what need, therefore, he will argue, can there be for troubling either one or the other of them about the Bible or its contents. In like manner, what occasion can such a director of the conscience be expected to see for troubling the Idolatrous Heathen with the Bible, or with Missionaries, beyond the scanty and absolutely inefficient supply already afforded by Societies duly incorporated according to the Statute?

He has never considered the vicious practices of the Heathen as destructive to their immortal souls, nor their false doctrines as "doctrines of devils:" how then can such a man feel an interest in the conversion of the Heathen, all of whom he imagines may be saved without Baptism; or in the conversion of those nearer home, all of whom he supposes to have been converted by Baptism?

I am, &c.

LETTER III.

DEAR SIR,

WE have lately heard much from high authority, of the propriety of further provision being made for Public Worship; but while such a measure is desirable *per se*, it is not enough that more Churches should be provided, but essentially necessary that persons duly qualified should be appointed to officiate in them. There are, surely, few among us, who can deem it of importance to have more EMPTY Churches, and it may be well to consider a few causes of there being so many already. The alliance of Religion and Politics is unfavourable to the purity of those ecclesiastical springs which are destined to flow through the nation. What, for instance, can be more monstrous than the creation of one Bishop in preference to another, because the favoured candidate can rank among his friends a greater number of votes; or the elevation of an Archdeacon, a Dean, or a Prebend, as the reward of Parliamentary or public services, in the friends of those Dignitaries? The transfer of ecclesiastical property for pecuniary considerations, is another evil opposed to the efficiency and purity

of the Clergy as a body. "No laws nor provisions," (says Bishop Burnet,) "have ever been able to preserve the Church from this great mischief, which can never be removed, till patrons look on their right to nominate to the charge of souls, as a trust for which they are to render a severe account to God, and till priests are cured of their aspiring to that charge, and look on it with dread and caution:" and again, "Simony has been oft complained of, and many laws and canons have been made against it, but new contrivances are still found out to elude them all; and it is a disease that will still hang on the Church as long as covetousness and ambition ferment so strongly in the minds of Churchmen." The lay patronage of the Church is another and grievous evil:—what can the head officer of the Law, or of the State, (however individually respectable in their own peculiar province,) be supposed to know about the essential qualifications of persons, for the several livings in their gifts? It is affirmed that one living per week, is the average number of livings to which the head of the Law presents in right of his office; and the Church patronage in the hands of the Ministry, and the Nobility, is of very considerable magnitude. If, indeed, all the personages who receive patronage were equally competent to the discharge of the duties connected with it, it would signify but little to the country at large, who might present or be presented to livings; but when the previous process to which Candidates for Holy Orders have been subjected, and the facility with which ordination is obtained, are considered, it is obvious, that a great majority of those, from whom ecclesiastical patrons are to choose, can have no distinct acquaintance with the peculiar and distinguishing doctrines of the Gospel, and therefore are wholly unprepared to exhibit them to the people. Hence the general prevalence of a cold didactic style of preaching, where heathen ethics usurp the place of christian morals, and a stated quota of duty is performed without any reference to practical effects.

It is not too much to assert, that the great points of doctrine peculiar to the scheme of the Gospel are either entirely suppressed, or partially enunciated; and while the text itself is from the Bible, its commentary is from writers who lived under the Pagan dispensation, and who would gladly have hailed the full display of light which they were not permitted to behold, but which their wiser descendants can contemplate without emotion, and neglect without compunction. Such statements of the Gospel, as I allude to, are neither calculated to reach the heart nor to interest the affections; they have little or nothing in them which can meet the case of man, as a fallen creature in need of divine restoration, or as an ignorant creature in need of spiritual illumination;—they appeal to no superior principles of action, and effect no renewal of heart, or change of life, but leave the hearer in undisturbed possession of his self-complacency, relying on his imaginary virtues, and indulgent to his less open vices.—The system in question “never mentions hell to ears polite,” or suggests a doubt whether any one of decent exterior can be out of the way to heaven;—it even supplies (*like Popery*) a sedative for a vicious life, in publicly teaching the utility of *Prayers for the dead*; a doctrine which we have lately seen propounded by a prelate, and defended by a minister of our Protestant Church, although eminently calculated to induce and sanction a vicious life, and the foundation of one half of the errors of the Church of Rome. Under the modern and palatable doctrines, congregations are flattered into a belief of their spiritual safety, because they are *sound Churchmen*, and are encouraged in a course of worldly conformity, by being taught that *schism* is a greater evil than all other sin put together, and that the greatest evidence of schism is, subscribing to the Bible Society and the Church Missionary Society. In this way the interests of a party within the Church are indeed promoted, but not the interests of the Church itself; nor is it easy to conceive a greater dereliction of ecclesiastical

duty, than for learned dignitaries of our Protestant and Biblical Church to denounce from the pulpit and the press, such institutions as have for their simple and fundamental object the dispersion of the Scriptures of Truth, and the evangelizing of the heathen world.* As if, however,

* How different from this conduct of certain of the Clergy of England, is the conduct of Foreign Princes and Prime Ministers in relation to the Bible Society.

The Landgrave Charles of Hesse thus wrote to the Rev. Dean Callisen of Sleswick, from Gottorp, on the 6th of May last:

"I received, my dear Dean, with real pleasure the interesting Report of the Bible Society; much, very much indeed has been done in one single year. I may almost assert, that not only the first stone has been laid, but the foundation of the building completed. Bibles for distribution are now wanting; and I wish exceedingly that we had a printing press entirely appropriated for their impression, from which, not ourselves only, but such of our neighbours also as might desire it, could be abundantly supplied with the Sacred Volume; and I indulge a hope that this may yet come to pass. I said before, that the foundation of the building has been completed; *the raising of the superstructure chiefly devolves on the Clergy. The people feel a relish for real religion, they regard the Bible as its purest fountain. They ought, therefore, to be instructed how to read it profitably, and taught that the doctrines of our Lord Jesus Christ, as laid down by himself, and salvation through his merits, are the chief points in which we are all interested.*"

Prince Gallitzin, the Prime Minister of the Emperor of Russia, wrote, as under, to the Committee of the Russian Bible Society in St. Petersburg, previous to his departure for Moscow in September last:

"On the occasion of my expected departure from St. Petersburg, I feel it my duty to express to the Committee, that though I shall not have the heartfelt satisfaction of being personally present at its meetings; yet I most earnestly desire, and fondly hope, to continue to take an active part in this work of God; to which, by the grace of Him who gave us his word, we are all called; — called, *not merely for our own instruction and salvation, but in order that we may have it in our power to impart the same to our fellow-men also*, and thereby render every one who receives it, a partaker of the invaluable blessings which our Lord has prepared for

the ordinary modes of attack were not deemed sufficient, we have now witnessed a public attempt to disturb the harmony of a meeting of members of the Church of England, with a Bishop of that Church at its head, and have seen a subsequent publication of the offensive Protest delivered on that occasion, which has since received the public thanks of the Clergy of one Archdeaconry, and has never yet been disavowed by the Prelate or Clergy in whose names it professes to have been delivered: nay it further appears, that the Protester has received promotion in the Church since his protest, both for himself and his son-in-law, the Archbishop of Canterbury having given him the living of Deptford near London, lately held by Doctor Burney, worth about £500 a year, while a near relative is to succeed to another living held by Doctor Burney, which is of far greater value, being estimated at considerably above £1000 a year. Such alas! are some of the inevitable consequences of the desecrating alliance between Church and State; and thus it is that certain persons who desire to attract the notice, and secure the patronage of "the powers that be," seek to recommend themselves to notice, and rarely without success.—It may be an offensive truth, but the materials which lie before me enable me to assert, without the fear of contradiction, that opposition to the Bible Society and the Church Missionary Society, has

"them that love him. I reckon it a high honour conferred upon me, indeed, to be among the number even of the meanest labourers in that vineyard, whose fruits nourish souls unto eternal life; to be the weakest instrument in the hands of Him, in whom we live, and move, and have our being. In every place, on all occasions, amidst the vicissitudes of this life, it shall ever remain a sacred duty with me, to co-operate to the utmost of my power, under the blessing of the Saviour of souls, whose aid I implore, in bestowing the word of God on those who have it not. Nor is the importance of this duty lessened, in my estimation, by the consideration, that neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God who giveth the increase."

been made, for some time past, as much the test of orthodoxy in the Church of England, as opposition to Jansenism (in other words to *true Religion*) was at one period in the Church of France, and has received the same rewards. Now if this system is to proceed, and the Clergy of the land, as a body, are to continue to run counter to the popular feeling which in this Protestant country is so decidedly favourable to Benevolent and Religious Societies, it is easy to see that we may obtain more Churches and more Clergymen by Act of Parliament, but the bulk of the population will inevitably be driven from the National Establishment; because no process of reasoning will induce the Public to suppose that those men can be in earnest for the salvation or happiness of mankind, who can deliberately and publicly oppose such schemes of extensive usefulness; and who, when 650 millions of professed heathens yet remain in ignorance and idolatry, can not only coldly withhold the means of instruction themselves, but profanely endeavour, by argument and influence, to prevent others from engaging in the same purposes of mercy.

Another cause of the secular state of the Established Clergy at large, may be found in the evil of pluralities and non-residence; in reference to which, Bishop Burnet observes, that it is “a corruption of so crying and scandalous a nature, that wherever it is practised, it is sufficient to possess the people with great prejudices against the Church that is guilty of it; there being nothing more consonant to the plainest impressions of reason, than that every man who undertakes a cure of souls, whom at his ordination he has vowed he would instruct, feed and govern, ought to discharge that trust himself, which is the greatest and most important of all others.”—It only remains to observe, that this is an evil equally out of the reach of legislative remedies as the other, as much has been done to little purpose, although with the best intentions. There are few things, however, which tend more effectually to the degradation and desecration of

the sacred office, than the union of the Civil Magistrate with the Minister of Religion; the proper and legitimate sphere of action for a Clergyman is the discharge of ecclesiastical and not of civil functions; and if he possesses any adequate sense of his peculiar duties, he will find the consecration to this end of all the powers of his body and mind, his faculties, his talents and his time, infinitely inadequate for the occasion;—the Clergy should leave such matters as legal and magisterial duties.

To conclude, I would earnestly suggest the importance of timely consideration on the part of ecclesiastical patrons, as to the necessity of selecting men for the cure of souls, who are really in earnest in their work, and who entertain a proper sense of its nature and importance, as well as of the deep responsibility which attaches to the ministerial character.—I would earnestly conjure them not to measure the usefulness of candidates for favour, by their abhorrence of the Bible Society, nor consider them only deserving of patronage in proportion as they can rail at those, whom they are pleased to term Sectarians and Schismatics, but whom they might find some difficulty in proving either one or the other.—I would more especially entreat the Government and the Parliament, not to consider that all is done when new Churches are built,—we want *Congregations* rather than Churches. It is found at present in every case where a decided prominence is given to the vital truths of Christianity, and where Ministers are faithful to their charge, that they are not long left to preach to empty benches, or naked walls;—there is that in a message of mercy, when delivered with seriousness and fidelity, which presents too powerful an attraction to be neglected or despised; it is an adaptation to the necessities of our common nature, and is invariably accompanied by the blessing of God. I know the ready answer to this will be, that popularity is not a certain test of truth;—I admit that it is not an infallible one,—but it must at least be admitted, in return, that the popular opinion *may* be the correct one,

and that it is not therefore erroneous, because it is popular. I think also (to take the lowest ground) that it will at least be wise in the national Clergy, to consider that it is worth their while to endeavour to become popular, if it were only because in this free country, no system can long be permanent, which is once completely unpopular. The National Clergy of England, during two remarkable periods of her history, lost the affections and support of the people, and the consequence was their ruin ;—the Popish Clergy at the Reformation, by opposing what the people knew to be right ; and the Episcopal Clergy in king Charles the First's time, by upholding what the nation knew to be wrong. Let the Clergy of the present day take care that they do not themselves contrive to run the vessel of the State upon a rock by their bad pilotage.

I am, &c.

LETTER IV.

DEAR SIR,

IN Ireland, as in England, there has of late been a strong movement against the Bible Society by the so-called Orthodox Divines, and the controversy still rages. In the Irish branch of the business there is nothing new, except the personalities which have been introduced against the supporters of the Society, the Irish being naturally warmer, and when excited, less nice in the expression of their feelings. For the rest, the uproar is merely a reverberating echo of the thunders that, having rolled over our heads, died harmlessly away, and have now arisen in another quarter. The great object of the enemies of truth

in Ireland, is, to fasten the charge of disaffection against Church and State upon the Society, and to call on Government to suppress it. They wish to identify the Society with those whom they call sarcastically "Gospel Preachers;" the next step is to identify them with all descriptions of Dissenters; and then, to complete the picture, every intemperate movement or hostile disposition, which has been evinced since the Long Parliament, is ostentatiously displayed; and it is asked, if the country can submit to have the whole nation organized into clubs by such men as these.*

There is no reason to apprehend the least injury to the cause itself, which prospers daily, and must do so as darkness retires, and light increases in Ireland; but there can be no doubt that the Established Church in that country is in the greatest danger, not indeed of losing her temporal wealth, of having her connexion with the State dissolved, or her Bishops ejected from the House of Peers, but of losing her congregations, and having her churches deserted. The population of the country is Popish. The Protestant minority is so divided that the Church has the greater share; yet the case stands precisely thus. The Methodists are meditating a defection, which may not become general until the next generation. The Dissenters are certainly making a great progress, and their schools are filled with Catholic children, who, we may reasonably hope, may come to see the errors of their parental creed—they will naturally in such a case rally round their instructors, and every protestant school will become the nucleus of a dissenting congregation. Add to all this, the public character of the Clergy as a body—certainly by no means

* The Rev. R. Lloyd has virtually asked the same question throughout his late work, and has endeavoured to rouse the State to defend the Church. As he quotes Lord Bacon, I will quote him too. "I hope that my Lords of the Clergy do altogether disallow " that their credit should be thus defended."

respectable in the eyes of the public—and daily losing the opinion of sober and thinking men by their opposition to the Bible Society; an opposition, undoubtedly countenanced by the higher orders of the Protestant Clergy; and by an overwhelming majority of the Popish Clergy, both high and low. In reference indeed to the opposition of the Popish Clergy, no opportunity is lost by them of protesting and preaching against the use of the Protestant Version of the Bible; and while many publicly prohibit the children from attending the schools in which that version is used, others are as publicly denouncing those schools in which any version of the scriptures whatever is used—an injunction, in the true spirit of the late Papal Bulls against the Bible and the Bible Society, and of the late Papal Protest against the Church Missionary Society and its Members. Now all these things—the alliance of the Protestant and Popish Clergy against the Truth of God—the consequent increase of Dissenters—the gradual subsiding of converted Catholics, as well as evangelical Protestants, into the ranks of Dissent—the loss of reputation among the national Clergy, partly from their indifference to truth, and partly from their opposition to it—are daily thinning the members of the Establishment, and decreasing its respectability. The operation of such things is visibly begun, and if left to itself, who can tell where it may end? Common sense would suggest what remedy should be applied. Rouse the Clergy to a sense of their real duty and best interests—fill the parishes with able, pious, and laborious men—who will win the affections, and convert the souls of men by their preaching and living—whose personal attention to their flocks will leave no room for the interference of others—and whose consistent character will command the respect of the Catholics. Yet how directly opposite to all this is the plan pursued by the Irish Bishops: it is a fact capable of the most satisfactory proof, that a young man who has been wild, profligate and idle at college, finds no difficulty whatever in procuring ordination, and acquiring a

curacy, if not a rectory; while a person of unblemished morals and high reputation for literary talents, if he has been marked as a Calvinist, either by his avowed profession of serious religion, his attachment to, or even his acquaintance with, any Evangelical Clergymen, or his support of the Bible Society, is almost invariably repulsed by the Bishops, in a manner extremely unpleasant to the feelings of a Gentleman; or if he obtains ordination, and becomes a preacher, is quickly obliged to abandon his station by the refusal of patronage and protection, while church preferments are bestowed either on the friends of the Irish Government, or on the relations of Bishops, whose chief attention is directed to the increase of their incomes, and successfully too, since Episcopal property has increased within the last twenty years more than any other. There are several Ministers now residing in England, and preaching with much acceptance here, who would have preferred Ireland, as the land of their nativity, and the proper sphere of their usefulness, but for the unkindness and neglect with which they have been treated in some instances, and the actual persecution they have encountered in others. Can the blessing of God be expected to attend such a systematic preference on the part of the Episcopacy, of vice to virtue, of usefulness to inactivity, and of Heathen morality to Christian holiness in the Ministers of Divine Truth?

In reference to those men who boldly and honestly proclaim the Gospel to the public, and who adorn it by lives of self-denial and heavenly ardour, the higher Clergy are so far from having formed any just conceptions of the nature of these men's claims to countenance and support, that they have actually joined in the cry against them as Calvinists, Puritans, and Swaddlers,* forgetting (if they ever read it) the solemn inquiry of Lord Bacon, "Ought not the

* The Irish term of reproach for Evangelical Christians, answering to the title of *Saints* in England.

“Bishops to keep one eye open to look upon the good that these men do, and not to fix them both upon the hurt that they suppose cometh by them?” Indeed, in reference to such mistaken views as are general on the part of the Hierarchy, we may well unite in the still more solemn prayer of that illustrious character, “I pray God to inspire the Bishops with a fervent love and care of the people,—and that they may not so much urge things in controversy, as things out of controversy, which all men confess to be gracious and good.”—In Ireland, however, as in England, so far is this from being the case, that he who can write most bitterly against a Society which has done so much for the United Empire and the whole world, as the Bible Society—is in a fair way to honour and emolument as the reward of his unhallowed services, whoever else may want either the one or the other. The loss indeed of these things ought to be no care or concern with those who cannot obtain them without the sacrifice of conscience; nor are they, but a Layman (as is the writer of these letters) may and must deplore the irreparable injury which the Church and State alike sustain, when Churchmen find their account in writing down the Bible Society, and when opposition to that Society in any shape is made a principal test of merit, and becomes the high road to fame and emolument. In this way the heads of the Church effectually develop their own principles, and by the rewards conferred upon those who lend themselves to such an employment, do in fact oppose the truth as effectually as if they took the field in their proper persons, thus answering minutely to the description given by Lord Bacon. “Hollow Church Papists are like the roots of nettles, which themselves sting not, but yet they bear all the stinging leaves.”—*Qui facit per alterum, facit per se!*

If it should be thought that opposition to the Bible Society is not of the same nature with opposition to the Church Missionary Society, and that I have therefore

strayed from my subject; I reply, that both one and the other of these unhallowed attempts to suppress and silence Divine Truth, and to perpetuate the reign of ignorance and sin, have a common origin, and a close connection; and are therefore almost invariably found to exist in the same persons, although exhibiting themselves under different modifications, from natural temperament and other circumstances. They derive their source from an utter ignorance of the word and will of God—from the unsubdued corruptions of that carnal heart which is enmity against God—because it is still in a state of nature, and has never yet experienced the renewal of Divine grace. They are referable alike to that distaste for, and abhorrence of the light of heaven, which must be expected to exist, and will be found more or less in every mind which is not itself illuminated by that light; and they are awful evidences of the little value in which the soul is held by such persons, and of the small importance which they attach to the solemn and terrible realities of death, of judgment, and of eternity.

They indicate, in short, the prevalence of practical infidelity erecting its standard by the side even of an orthodox creed, and reigning supreme in spite of the external profession of that very Gospel which was intended for the conversion of the world, and must therefore be diffused throughout all nations, “for the obedience of faith,”—“without which, it is impossible to please God.”

I am, &c.

LETTER V.

DEAR SIR,

IT is not my purpose to attempt any particular detail of the necessity and duty of Missionary exertions, after the powerful and eloquent defence which has appeared. The subject, in all its main features and prominent bearings, has been already exhausted and beggared; but there are certain considerations, which, as they have not yet received the attention which they appear to me to have required, may perhaps be seasonably adverted to at this time. I allude more especially to the *cause* and *origin* of that opposition which has lately arisen against the Missionary Society and those who support it; and I feel it the more necessary to advert to the grounds of such opposition, because this is in fact the whole of the question; and because, until that question be fairly and honestly set upon its right legs, and until the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth be told, it is in vain to expect that objectors like the Archdeacon will be silenced, or that the object which either the Church Missionary Society, or its opponents have in view, will be distinctly understood. The contest then is one not of words, but of things—the attack on the Society is nothing less than an attack on vital Christianity—the defence of that Society is nothing else than the necessary defence of the Gospel of Salvation. The respective parties are the lovers of light, and of darkness; and as the Scribes and Pharisees in our Lord's time were opposed to himself and his disciples, in consequence of the implacable enmity of the human heart, in its natural state, to truth and holiness, so it is at the present moment—“as then, he that was born after the flesh, persecuted him

“that was born after the spirit, even so it is now.”
(Gal. iv. 29.)

The persecution of the present times is confined to the tongue and the pen, the sword as yet remains in its scabbard ; but how long it may be continued there by the restraining providence of God, is known to himself alone. In whatever way, however, the spirit of opposition may shew itself, it is referable alone to the want of spiritual religion in the objector. I remember to have been present at the powerful and affecting sermon which was delivered in London by that ardent friend of missions, Dr. Buchanan, and I was much impressed with a sentiment which at once detected and exposed the secret reason of all the opposition to this Society or the Bible Society.—It is to be feared (said he) that in cases of apathy or hostility, there is an inadequate sense of the importance of true religion, and the value of the human soul.—If this were not the case, how, I ask, could any man rest satisfied with what has been done, or with what is doing for the Heathen world? The Church of England has not at this moment, as an Ecclesiastical Establishment, any Society exclusively devoted to the object of Missions ; and the one which is collaterally engaged in this object is doing, comparatively, nothing. It can barely be said to exist, so far as missions are concerned, and certainly has not the energy and functions of real life. The Church, in point of fact, has three Missionaries in one corner of India, one of whom is past his labour, and this is to be considered a sufficient provision for 600 millions of heathens ! Objectors to this Society then make out a strong case against themselves, but none against the Society. Can a stronger proof be supplied that these enemies of all good, are influenced by the identical motives of the Scribes and Pharisees of old, than such an utter and shameless indifference to the wants and miseries of a sin-struck world ; and is it not equally demonstrable, that the opposition which is offered to missions, partakes of the precise character which marked

alike the hostility of the polished Pagans, and of the prejudiced Jews. There are two views, however, in which such opposition may be hailed as useful: 1st. It will serve to ascertain the existence of truth, which, wherever it is found, must excite the hatred of the world, or it will want one of its main characteristics; and, 2ly.—It will most effectually promote and advance the truth, which has ever flourished most by the very means which have been employed for its extinction.

I would next advert to the manifest inconsistency of Members of the Church of England, opposing a Church Missionary Society. To take three extracts from the single prayer of daily use, with which our Lord has supplied his Church, "Hallowed be thy name,"—but, how is the name of the Triune God to be hallowed, by those who never heard of it as revealed in the Holy Scriptures? "Thy kingdom come;"—but how is this kingdom to come, if we will do nothing to hasten its coming, and only oppose those who are engaged in advancing it?—"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,"—but is it meant to be said, that the will of God is done, or can be done by ignorant, and sensual, and sanguinary Idolaters; and how are they to know what the will of God is, or how they may do it, without the revelation of that will;—and how shall they hear without a preacher, and how shall they preach, except they be sent? The Ordination service, also supposes Ministers to be moved by the Holy Ghost, to promote the glory of God, and to set forward the salvation of all men; but how are the glory of God and the salvation of all men to be advanced by opposing, instead of furthering the instruction of the world? Again, the Collect for Good Friday prays, that those who are now unbelievers may become believers, and be made one fold under one shepherd; but how is this desirable end to be brought about, if the fold of what is exclusively designated as the true Church, is closed so fast on every side, as to afford no outlet for the Ministers of the Gospel to go and teach all nations, and to permit no

inlet for the return of the lost and wandering sheep, which are scattered abroad in the earth? Is it for us to spin ourselves round in the silk of our own selfishness; and hang ourselves up in a corner of Christian Europe, and not rather to emerge from our torpor;—take the wings of the morning, and fly to the uttermost parts of the earth, with glad tidings of great joy to all?—I should be glad to know how objectors of this class, (whether Archdeacons, or personages of less notoriety,) can possibly versify an invitation to idolatrous heathens, by joining in the hundredth psalm :

“ All people that on earth do dwell,

“ Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice.

“ Him serve with fear—his praise forthtell,

“ Come ye before him and rejoice.”

But how are all people on earth, or any people out of England, to accomplish such objects, or arrive at such results, who are denied the physical and moral means of becoming any wiser, or holier, or happier than they are at this moment, while emerged in all the grossness of heathen darkness, and all the impurity of the most debasing lusts;—how are they to sing to a God of whom they have never heard,—to serve a God whom they have never known, or to praise a God, from whom they are unconscious that they have derived a single benefit? How gross and grievous is the inconsistency—not to say hypocrisy—of professing to desire these spiritual results, and at the same time to deny and withhold those means of grace, which, under the blessing of the Most High, are calculated to produce such important ends.—Again I ask, with what consistency can *they* call upon all people under the sun, to know and serve and praise God, who by their conduct virtually contend, that all people can go on quite as well in ignorance of God, and in opposition to his commands?

I would next notice the *impolicy* of opposition on the part of members of the Church of England. Is this to follow the injunction of the Bible;—“ arise and shine, “ for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen

“upon thee:”—may she not fear, that if her light is thus hid under a bushel, instead of being set on a candlestick, that God will in his righteous judgment, extinguish the light of her religious profession, and remove her candlestick out of his place. If it be true, that to whom much is committed, of him will much be required; then how deep is the responsibility of professing England to communicate the blessings she has received. Where are now the Seven Churches of Asia? Are they not swept from the face of the earth; and what peculiar and exclusive claims to distinction, has the Church of England to plead, or why is she to expect any exemption in her particular favour, if barrenness and unfruitfulness are found in her? The *impolicy* of such conduct is further evinced, as exposing the Church of England to the reproach of the Church of Rome, for neglecting the heathen world. True it is, indeed, that the missions of the Church of Rome have been in general any thing else than christian and evangelical: although, however, she had but a corrupt religion to propagate, and corrupt priests to teach it, still as a church, she has at all events made a public profession of the duty of christianizing the heathen, and so far has confessed her Saviour before men.—In reference also to the Dissenters from our national Establishment; it is not less a reproach and disgrace to the Church of England, to be so far excelled as she is in this labour of love, by her younger sister. It is highly discreditable to the national Establishment to be so far outstripped, as we behold her by the exertions of her dissenting brethren. When we know that on the side of any Establishment are found power, connection with the State, wealth, influence, a navy at command, and large and extensive means of public usefulness, is it policy to suffer those who want such means to effect more without them, than the Church has atchieved with them? Surely a proper regard to her own place and station might teach the Church of England a different lesson—not indeed that I would encourage an unhallowed competition, but a holy rivalry—and such an honourable anxiety to fill her

proper sphere, as should shew that her talents had not been bestowed in vain. I would next notice the ingratitude of opposition. Is this to be grateful for our own eminent religious advantages? What once were we? If Missionaries had not reached our shores, in what a state should we be now? Our druidical ancestors worshipped the grim and bloody deities of their own superstition, precisely as India does now, and sacrificed their own wives and daughters to devils, in like manner, and to them that were no gods.—I believe, indeed, that none but those who are spiritually enlightened, can understand the full difference between Idolatry and true Religion; but it might have been supposed that a mere regard for the blessings of civilization, and a simple respect for the light of nature and gift of reason, might have conducted a learned Archdeacon to the conclusion, that as far as the bodies of men were concerned, to say nothing of their souls, the worship of worthless Idols, and the pursuit of debasing lusts, were opposed to natural reason, contrary to common sense, and unfriendly to human happiness. To say nothing of the blessings of the Gospel,—it is the height of ingratitude, for those whose own minds are cultivated and enlightened, to be found in a league against science as well as scripture, and not only to be resisting the Holy Spirit of God in his operations on the soul of man, but to be also found in direct opposition to the progress of the human mind, and the interests of the human species. Such conduct on the part of a Clergyman is less excusable, than the indifference and stupidity manifested by the narrators of modern travels (to China, for instance,) who are content to contemplate and record the gross Idolatries they witness, merely as so many natural phenomena, or as constituting a part of those national customs which lead the men to wear large hats, or the women to wear small shoes. We may indeed better understand, and excuse the ignorance of those persons, who being untaught themselves in the nature of the religion they profess, can hardly be expected to partake of the emotions of

David, when he contemplated the state of the dark places of the earth, and the habitations of cruelty ; but we are lost in astonishment, when they, who by their office and education, should have acquired a very different lesson, willingly close their eyes on the deadly pollutions of Paganism, and virtually argue, that a Religion of God's appointment is no better than one whose origin is from below, and whose votaries are training for destruction. If the Protestant Pagans who intend to enlighten the world by publishing the results of their observations, deem it (with Pope) a matter of no consequence, whether men worship God as Jehovah, Jove, or Lord ; still, we should look for different sentiments in the Dignitaries of our Established Church, and the accredited guides of the people. The case, however, is, that the Travellers who have been alluded to are unenlightened and unconverted men ; and how is it possible to avoid coming to the same conclusion in reference to other objectors, who are no less accurate specimens of an overwhelming majority of our own countrymen, over whom they exercise ecclesiastical jurisdiction ? Thus it is that residents in India deliberately told us, before the subject was investigated by Parliament and the country, that men required no other Religion than that of Idolatry—and might safely rest in external forms, placate the Deity by human sacrifices, and atone for sin by rigorous penances and frequent ablutions ; and why, but because they were not sensible of their own condition by nature and practice, and ignorant of their own want of some other Religion than one of forms and externals. The reference, therefore, to such characters, as to the necessity of Christianity in India, was something equivalent to taking the opinion of men who never went to Church in their lives, whether divine worship be an absolute duty ; and what, in like manner, can we expect of learned Divines, who are spiritually unenlightened, with regard to the spiritual wants and miseries of the destitute and perishing Heathen ?

I would notice next the folly and criminality of oppo-

sition. It is worse than weakness, to oppose the will of God. His will is, that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth—that they should repent, and believe the Gospel,—and he has revealed a way of salvation, which is open, free for all, and in which the scribes and disputers of this world must walk, as well as the poor and the ignorant, or they will miss of heaven at last. He has gathered a Church out of the world, of which he has declared, that it is founded upon a rock, and that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. He has set up a chief corner stone, of which he has declared, that whoever falls upon it shall be broken, and that upon whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder—who then is he that contendeth with his Maker? Let the potsherd strive with the potsherd of the earth, but let no man affect to be wiser than his Maker, as in fact he does whenever he resists his will. We may next consider the danger of opposition to the objector. This is a taking away the key of knowledge. It is an evidence of the want of love to the Saviour, and indicates a coldness and selfishness which are the direct opposites of genuine piety. “It is observable (says the pious and learned Dr. Doddridge) that no fewer than eleven of “St. Paul’s Epistles begin with exclamations of joy, praise “and thanksgiving—as soon as he thought of a Christian “Church, planted in one place or another, there seems to “have been a flow of the most lively affection accom- “panying the idea, in which all sense of his temporal “afflictions were swallowed up, and the fulness of his heart “vents itself in the most cheerful, exalted, and devout “language.” Is this the spirit in which one of his successors in the external Ministry presented himself in a Public Meeting of professing Christians and Churchmen, openly branded them with opprobrious names, and, contrary to that charity which “thinketh no evil,” protested both against their object and themselves? In the case of a single cup of cold water given to a disciple in the name of a disciple, it was esteemed as given to Christ himself; but it is also

declared, that at the final condemnation of the ungodly, the sentence shall be couched in the following terms: "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it not unto me." When the late Bull of the Pope against all Bible Societies and all versions of the Bible in the vernacular tongues was first announced in a Committee of the Bible Society, an old, simple and honest member of that Society observed, that he wished the Pope and his Cardinals would only read the second Psalm; and what does this go to?—It is simply a proclamation on the part of the Almighty, that he had given to the Saviour of sinners "the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession;" that resistance to this appointment would inevitably entail destruction on the opponent; and that our simple duty, our highest wisdom, and our real security would be, to fall in with this provision of mercy, and either to kiss the golden sceptre of his love, or be dashed to pieces by the iron rod of his wrath. Finally, The *Encouragement* afforded to persevere is abundant in the extreme. It is the distrust of infidelity to doubt the most prosperous issue of our exertions. The express promises of God leave no doubt as to the final result of the humble attempts which are making to obey his own commands. The partial accomplishment of ancient prophecy, as actually realized before our eyes, points to the same end. Look at the results at this moment in India alone, which, whatever may be asserted to the contrary, is stretching out her hands unto God. In the South Seas, two whole Islands have lately renounced Idolatry, and have cast their stone and wooden deities to the bats and to the moles. The Rev. Mr. Marsden, the great Missionary of New South Wales and of New Zealand, writes as follows: "I am happy to say, that in the midst of every discouragement, I see the way preparing for the spread of the Gospel in this part of the world. New South Wales will be the grand point for establishing the Missions in the South Seas. I am more convinced of

“ this daily, and observe the divine goodness removing
 “ obstacles and furnishing the means for the healing of the
 “ Nations. I shall do all in my power, while it pleases
 “ God for me to remain here, for this great work.”

Before I close the present Letter, I am tempted to transcribe another part of Mr. Marsden's communication, for the purpose of shewing that he is no more without the opposition of the world in his Missionary exertions abroad, than the Bishop of Gloucester was in his Missionary exertions at home. “ I have had (says he) my conduct misrepresented and my character traduced, through the
 “ enmity of the human heart; for, to reconcile the spirit of
 “ the world with the Gospel of Jesus, is impossible.
 “ ‘Through evil report and good report we must pass to
 “ Canaan.’ I may truly say, that ‘ fightings without,
 “ and fears within, continually attend me.’ I trust the God
 “ whom I wish to serve in the Gospel of his Son will
 “ deliver me out of the hands of all them that hate me.
 “ No temptations however at present are joyous but grievous,
 “ whatever their future fruits may be. The words of St.
 “ Paul are of vast importance: ‘ Pray ye to be delivered
 “ from unreasonable and wicked men, for all men have not
 “ faith;’ none can know their force and propriety, but
 “ those who are called to contend with such characters; my
 “ situation is peculiarly trying, as I am nearly alone: there
 “ are few men who have nerve sufficient to meet the storm,
 “ and perhaps few of us would, if it were possible to avoid
 “ it;—no man stood with St. Paul at Cæsar's bar.”—I think, that when the opposition of perverse and ungodly men to the diffusion of the Gospel of Christ, whether under Paganism or Christianity, whether in Great Britain or Botany Bay, is considered, the remarkable identity of that opposition, and of its cause, cannot fail to impress the most inattentive observer.

I am, &c.

LETTER VI.

DEAR SIR,

THE enemies of the Church Missionary Society being almost with one consent the foes of the Bible Society, and upon the same principles, I am again induced to advert to the opposition which has sprung up against the latter Society, and which has of late assumed a more decided character, and a more serious aspect, and is likely to become instrumental in enabling the Public to distinguish between truth and error, and to separate the precious from the vile. It is impossible to observe the opposition either in one or the other of these cases, and not to notice at the same time the striking analogy which appears in the origin, nature, and effects of that opposition. It was an observation of Plato, that if virtue could only be presented to the world in a bodily shape, every one would be so delighted with the appearance as to be enamoured at once. In this remark he shewed how little he knew of his own heart, and of the hearts of others. The highest perfection of virtue *was* presented to the world in the person of one who was God, or he could not have been sinless, and Man, or he could not have suffered : but what was the result ? The world despised and rejected a higher and purer representation of virtue than Plato himself had ever imagined—they hated and crucified the Lord of Life and Glory. But has not something of this kind taken place with respect to the Bible Society ? If in times of religious persecution, and spiritual darkness, any one had figured to himself the formation of such a Society, as should have for its exclusive object the dispersion of the word of God in every land and every language, and

which, in attaining that blessed object, should unite and harmonize discordant sects and opinions; which should engage in one common labour of love all who had before fancied that they must leave off work, rather than work together, and constrain them to merge those petty distinctions upon which they could not agree, in favour of a principle in which they could agree, namely, the duty and necessity of dispersing the word of God—would not such a man have imagined that the appearance of such a Society would be hailed by the good and the wise—by the Christian and the Politician, and that all would unite in regarding such an event as one of the most blessed and important circumstances that could have occurred? Now this man would appear from the sequel to be quite as much disappointed as Plato himself. We have lived to see the institution of the Bible Society; but how is it received by the world at large? After all the support it has met with, how few comparatively subscribe to it—and how many openly condemn and oppose it! I would say a little to each of these. First, as to the negligent and careless, who stand aloof because they have not made up their minds (as they call it.) Have you ever seriously considered the value of the Bible, or the worth of one soul? Are you ignorant that Idolatry reigns triumphantly at this moment over by far the largest portion of the globe—that there are millions of immortal and accountable creatures at this period of the Christian æra in utter ignorance of the God of the Scriptures, and of Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, and who know not so much as whether there be any Holy Ghost? Do you not profess to believe that there is but one way of salvation for sinners—that all men are these sinners, and as such are the children of wrath, and under a curse? If you did really believe these facts, with any other assent than that of the head, could you possibly withhold your aid on this occasion; and while your bleeding and wounded brother lies stretched and naked on the earth, determine with the Priest and Levite of an ancient or a modern church, to pass by on the other side?

To you who openly oppose the Bible Society, because you hold it unfavourable to Church discipline, and tending to schism, I would say—is the discipline of any, even the purest visible Church, to be put in competition with the salvation of the whole earth; and would the Church which you affect to honour, either expect the blessing of God, or deserve the support of mankind, if she could be content to regard the heathen nations with the criminal indifference which you would recommend, and withhold from them the Scriptures of Truth, which alone are able to make them wise unto salvation? If, however, your objection is, that danger must inevitably follow a union with such Dissenters and Sectaries, as are not even agreed upon the great fundamentals of religion; I answer, that the number of such persons is small indeed, and that association even with them, for the sole and specific object of dispersing the Bible without note or comment, does no more involve such a consequence as agreement in error, than it pledges all who might act with them on ordinary occasions, to adopt all their opinions on all subjects; while to the individuals who are in error, as well as to all the ignorant and obdurate who may obtain the Bible in consequence, the best and surest antidote to error is supplied by the Bible; and not only the possibility of injury precluded, but the certainty of advantage ensured. Is it any argument against your engaging in some extensive scheme of charity, that some of your colleagues and fellow-contributors are not of your own Church, or of your own way of thinking; and if no wise or good man would for such a reason refuse to benefit the bodies of his brethren, by what name shall we designate the narrow and exclusive policy which refuses to benefit their souls, because in the attempt to do so, some distant probabilities of evil to the National Church present themselves, and because the opinions and fears of man put in their claim to attention before the commands of God? Such conduct as this offers a direct opposition to the invisible Church of Christ, which shall endure when every visible Church on earth shall

have terminated its existence—it prefers the exterior framework and scaffolding of Religion, to the fair and goodly Temple which they were designed to rear—and in place of the joy which is in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, virtually supposes, that the ignorant and obdurate votaries of Idolatry and lust, need no repentance, and require no Bible. The Clergy of the Church of England, as a body, have long been pursuing a course which is calculated to forfeit the good opinion of the people, with whom the cause of the Bible Society is deservedly popular, and who are likely to withdraw their confidence from their Ecclesiastical guides, when they observe such a determined opposition on their part to the diffusion of the simple word of God, both at home and abroad. It is notorious that Episcopal Charges, Visitation Sermons, and Theological Pamphlets are, and have long been, made the vehicles of censure (and in some instances of abuse) of a Society, whose simple aim and object is the circulation of the Scriptures of Truth, without note or comment, throughout this country and the world. Now, I would ask, whether this line of conduct is likely to excite in the nation at large those feelings for their appointed and accredited pastors, which it is of the utmost importance to preserve? When the people thus observe so many of their Ministers opposed to the general sense of the nation on such a subject, as the utility and importance of a Society which distributes the Holy Scriptures to an extent hitherto unparalleled, is it not to be feared that they will suspect that the Church of England, like the Church of Rome, is afraid of the light?

The London Clergy in particular, as a body, are well known to be unfriendly to the Bible Society. It is only very recently that a striking case occurred, which will illustrate this fact. The Churchwardens of a church in the City had, upon the demise of its Rector, given permission to one of the Bible Associations in the City to hold its Annual Meeting in the Church. Application was made in consequence to a Gentleman who had recently served the office of

Sheriff, who is highly esteemed by his fellow-citizens, who willingly consented to preside on the occasion; and notice of the Meeting was publicly given by advertisements and posting bills, in the usual way. The Reverend Rector of an adjacent parish, who performed the duty of this church *vacante sede*, strongly remonstrated with the Churchwardens, only a few days before the intended Meeting, upon the impropriety of the permission which they had granted; stated that it was expressly contrary to a Canon of the Church; and alarmed them with the terrors of the Ecclesiastical Court; if they should venture to hold the Meeting in the Church. This had the effect of so completely intimidating the Churchwardens, that on the day immediately preceding that on which the Meeting was to be held, they stated, by letter to the Secretaries of the Society, that the Meeting could not be permitted to take place. As this, after the public notice which had been given in the Newspapers, and otherwise; would have created considerable disappointment and dissatisfaction, an eminent Civilian was immediately consulted on the part of the Society, who gave it as his written opinion, that no law, canon, or statute whatever, prohibited the use of the Church for such an occasion, or subjected the Churchwardens to any penalty or censure for granting it. He added also, in consultation, that the Church was the most proper place for such a Meeting, and that the fears of those officers were as groundless as the threat which had produced them. Under these circumstances, the Churchwardens consented that the Meeting should take place, which it did accordingly, and they have heard no more of the Spiritual Court. Their Reverend opponent, however, has not stood in the gap for nothing, but in common with others of his Colleagues, in the same sacred cause of hostility to the Bible Society, is all the better for this opposition, as far as this world's goods are concerned; a circumstance which forcibly reminds us of a certain passage in scripture, "They have their reward." I apprehend that this conduct, on the part of any Clergyman of

this Metropolis, does not keep pace with the religious light and knowledge of the age, and is better adapted for the meridian of Rome or Lisbon, than for that of London. It would not be difficult to add similar facts upon this subject, among which is the conduct of the Rev. Richard Lloyd, and his Curate at Midhurst, in consequence of which, the formation of an Auxiliary Bible Society in that parish was prevented—a fact in which the worthy Rector publicly exults with all the self-complacency of a man who seems really to think that he has done God service, and who evidently anticipates the same reward of his exertions, as has crowned the brows and recruited the finances of so many theological champions of the same school. Lest, however, his superiors in the Church and State should overlook his rural services, he has thought fit to work up the petty incident of a short correspondence, which ended in preventing this Society from being formed, into the imposing form of a long book, in which there occurs a great deal about Schism, and something about Baptismal Regeneration; the notice of which last point reminds me of the circumstance of the same Reverend Author having lately stood forth in the Bartlett's Buildings Society, on occasion of one of the Committee of the Bible Society having been proposed as a Member there, when he openly declared, that if the proposed Member held the tenet that Baptism was not Regeneration, he for one should vote against him, which he accordingly did, but without effecting his object, there being no other black-ball than his own! *Tantæne est animis cœlestibus ira.*

It requires no very acute discernment to see that these things can hardly go on, and the Church of England still maintain the pre-eminence which she has acquired. Let the Clergy of the Church of England reflect on the importance of their influence, and take care how it is permitted to operate in a wrong direction. They will do well to remember, as was once beautifully observed by Mr. Burkitt, that “the mistakes of a Layman are like the

"errors of a pocket watch, which affect only an individual; but that, when a Clergyman makes a mistake, it is like the town clock going wrong—it misleads a multitude."

I am, &c.

LETTER VII.

DEAR SIR,

A REAL friend and admirer of the Church of England would desire that she should not become unpopular by the indiscretion and interference of some of her sons, nor inefficient or mischievous by the erroneous and unscriptural theology of others. I have before adverted to the line of conduct pursued by certain Members of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, who have usurped the government of that Society, and while they would themselves be considered as the Society itself, would at the same time have that Society regarded as the representative and organ of the whole Church of England.* I am well aware, indeed, that a multitude of persons, both in and out of that Society, who are content to let others think for them, and never undergo the trouble of thinking for themselves, are willing to follow in the train of that soi-disant con-

* "The Church (says Lord Bacon) never wanteth a kind of persons which love the salutation of Rabbi, Master, not in ceremony or compliment, but in AN INWARD AUTHORITY WHICH THEY SEEK OVER MEN'S MINDS, IN DRAWING THEM TO DEPEND UPON THEIR OPINIONS, AND TO SEEK KNOWLEDGE AT THEIR LIPS."

clave of Orthodoxy, which some of its Members would have us believe is necessarily identified with the Church of England. There are, however, others both in and out of that Society, who are disposed to examine the pretensions to exclusive Orthodoxy which are thus preferred; and hence the strong impression, which was recently excited throughout this country by the Society adopting and publishing Dr. Mant's Tracts on Regeneration, which, after explaining to mean "a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness," the Doctor maintains is invariably and exclusively conveyed by Baptism, asserting that every individual to whom Baptism is rightly administered, is, ipso facto, born of God, and can never afterwards be considered as unregenerate; and all this, though many tracts of the Society (especially Bishop Bradford's) expressly deny the invariable and exclusive connexion of this spiritual regeneration—this death unto sin and new birth unto righteousness—with the rite of Baptism, and connect it no less with other means, such as Faith—the word of God—Prayer, &c. and represent Baptism as a covenant, the blessings of which depend, not on the right administration, but the right reception of the Sacrament, and all those as still unregenerate, who, though baptized with water, do not prove themselves by the holiness of their lives to be partakers of a new and divine nature. On these tracts producing strong remonstrances in the Society, as well as a powerful sensation in the Christian world, the Society felt it necessary to manufacture a Report upon the subject, in which it is contended, that there is no inconsistency or contradiction between the Society's Tracts, "although in
 " some instances the term Regeneration is used sometimes
 " strictly and properly as applied in our Liturgical offices
 " to the grace conveyed in the sacrament of Baptism; and
 " at other times in a larger and laxer sense, by different,
 " and occasionally by the same authors." The Report thus admits a twofold sense of the term Regeneration; but

Dr. Mant's Tracts admit but one, and condemn all those as heretics who differ from him : here then we have a striking inconsistency between the defenders of the Doctor and the Doctor himself, to say nothing of the inconsistency of both with the Scriptures of Truth. The Report obviously implies, that Dr. Mant's Tracts contain sound doctrine on the subject of Regeneration, in harmony at once with that hitherto held by the Society, and with the Liturgical Offices of the Church of England, and may therefore be considered as an authoritative declaration, that the doctrine of Dr. Mant is the doctrine of the Society, and ought to be received by those who defer to the judgment of that Society, as the doctrine of the Church of England ; thus effectually paving the way for a general relapse into that prime error of Popery, the efficacy of the mere *opus operatum* in the Sacraments, and for that fatal declension in spiritual Religion, to which the Church, in times of outward peace, is peculiarly exposed. Indeed, the doctrine which has been thus promulgated by Dr. Mant, and which has been first published, and then virtually defended by the Society, tends directly to remove the grand and essential distinction, which exists between a soul born of God, united to Christ, and influenced by the Holy Spirit—and a mere formalist in Religion. It was only to be expected that such Tracts, followed by such a Report, should produce a considerable schism in the Society ; and it is evident, that if it had been even lawful to appeal from Scripture to any human tribunal, the decisions of that Society, or of any of its learned and pious members, cannot be set up as an infallible criterion of truth ; since they are balanced by equal piety and equal learning in others. The difference between them on this subject relates to the identity or non-identity of baptismal and spiritual regeneration ; whether an inward change of heart is or is not invariably and necessarily connected with the outward administration of the sacrament of Baptism ; and one would think that the case of Simon Magus were suf-

ficient to set this question completely at rest ; since, though he had certainly experienced baptismal regeneration, having received the outward ordinance at the hands of an unquestionably suitable and regularly appointed minister, yet he was completely destitute of spiritual regeneration ; being, according to the infallible judgment of St. Peter, “ in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.” And it is easy to be imagined, that in the present day a person might submit to the outward ordinance of baptism, and thus experience baptismal regeneration, merely with a view to some temporal advantage or privilege. Is it not to be feared, that such instances are not uncommon in adult subjects ? Can any one suppose, then, that in such a case the baptized person would really experience a change of heart and of nature, (which is what Dr. Mant understands by spiritual regeneration ;) or rather would he not, after undergoing baptismal regeneration, be still destitute of spiritual regeneration, even as Simon Magnus was ? Whatever may now be the opinion of the Bartlett’s Buildings Society upon this subject, or of any individuals constituting a part of that Society, there can be no doubt in the mind of any reasonable person, what were the views of the Society upon the subject during the first hundred years of its existence. Various books and tracts were published under the sanction of the Society during that long period, uniformly maintaining the difference between baptismal and spiritual regeneration, and containing “ Prayers for Regeneration,” (*i. e.* spiritual regeneration,) and directions for obtaining the blessing, which could not be necessary or even proper, if baptismal and spiritual regeneration were uniformly identical and simultaneous. I have already referred to Bishop Bradford’s able discourse upon this subject, which has long been, and still continues to be, on the list of the Society’s tracts, having been originally published in the year 1709 ; and the seventh edition of which, published by the Society so lately as the year 1810, contains this premo-

dition : " This seventh edition is published at a time when " it is hoped that so judicious and scriptural a discourse " may be of service to settle the minds of good Chris- " tians, in some present disputes concerning baptismal and " spiritual regeneration."

Now the great object of that " judicious and scriptural" discourse, is, to point out the difference between baptismal and spiritual regeneration; to shew that " the washing " of regeneration," or outward Baptism, even when administered by a regular and lawful Minister, " may be " separated from the Holy Ghost," or spiritual regeneration; and to inquire, " How those persons who have had " the washing of regeneration, but are not yet renewed " by the divine Spirit, may attain the latter." So long, therefore, as that admirable discourse of, Bishop Bradford shall continue on the list of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, it is clear that, in the judgment of that collective body, there is an essential difference between baptismal and spiritual regeneration, whatever sentiments to the contrary may be entertained, or assertions made by an innovating party, who have found means to become Members of it. In proof of the existence of such a party, and of its mischievous and persevering efforts, we have only to refer to the testimony of one of the steadiest friends of the Christian Knowledge Society, the late Dr. Vincent, Dean of Westminster, who, in a letter which accompanied his contribution to the British and Foreign Bible Society, in December 1811, expresses himself in these memorable words: " From the time that " an attempt was made to create a breach between our " Society at Bartlett's Buildings and the British and " Foreign Bible Society, I determined to subscribe to the " latter, to shew that I did not belong to that party." Hence it plainly appears, from whence are to be dated, and to whom are to be ascribed, the divisions and animosities which have of late so lamentably prevailed in

our Church. It would be easy to point out at least fifty other books and tracts of the Bartlett's Buildings Society, published during the first century from its institution, wherein is expressly asserted and maintained, the same essential difference between baptismal and spiritual regeneration, how much soever the party above alluded to may wish to merge that distinction now. But if it be still contended that the identity of baptismal and spiritual regeneration is now not the doctrine of the above-mentioned party merely, but of the whole existing Society, I would inquire, (since such a change of sentiment necessarily implies the charge of heresy at one period or the other,) to which æra of the Society does such charge attach? to the present, or to that which is included within the first century of its duration? But the party of which I speak, do great dishonour to the Society, by endeavouring to affix so foul a stigma upon it; I contend, therefore, that, with the exception of the party above alluded to, the Bartlett's Buildings Society still holds the doctrine it has ever maintained, viz. the essential difference between Baptismal and Spiritual Regeneration. To suppose otherwise, would be to suppose that the Society is now employed in subverting the honourable labours, in which it had been occupied for more than a century; and would afford a lamentable instance indeed, of human indecision and infirmity.

In further proof that none of the Members of the Protestant Church of England can be expected to deliver themselves up bound hand and foot to the judgment of this Society, or of its Ecclesiastical, or even Episcopal Directors, we have only to advert to the important discussion which has been recently before the British public, on occasion of the Protestant Bishop of Chester having openly called upon his congregation in the conclusion of his Sermon upon the death of the Princess of Wales, to pray for her Soul, and having accordingly led that congregation in publicly offering up such a prayer in the pulpit; a line of conduct

which no sooner became the subject of public animadversion and censure by a lay Member of the Bartlett's Buildings Society, than it was immediately defended by a clerical Member of that Society, who contended that the doctrine in question was neither Popish nor unscriptural; neither dangerous nor absurd—an opinion, by the way, which is equally held by many of the leading Members of the same Society, and which would be as stoutly maintained by them, if the occasion should call for it, as the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration itself. Can we wonder that men, who neither hold nor teach the main doctrine of the Reformation—Justification by Faith only—should be thus permitted to fall into the grossest errors of Popery on the nature of the Sacraments, and on the duty and efficacy of Prayers for the dead? Do we not thus behold a species of judicial infatuation, under which the opponents of the Church Missionary Society, and of the Bible Society, are left to expose themselves without assisting their cause—and to prove that they are utterly ignorant of the first principles and elements of that Church, of which they would be considered as the only legitimate Representatives, the only sincere friends and the only efficient guardians? It is impossible to advert to the existing state of things in the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, without at the same time recurring to that period of our History, when certain persons, calling themselves the Church of England, (at the head of whom was Archbishop Laud,) set themselves up as the only true Representatives of that Church, and depreciated and persecuted all those within its pale, who did not come up to their standard of orthodoxy*—the only difference being, that they called such persons Roundheads and Puritans, instead of calling them by their present

* We are here forcibly reminded of a humorous etymology—Orthodoxy, a *man's own doxy*;—Heterodoxy, *another man's doxy*.

titles of Calvinists and Fanatics. When the nation was about to fall under the government of such ill-informed Ecclesiastics, when it was verging fast to Popery and arbitrary power, and when even the highest authority in the land was moved to make common cause with those who represented themselves as the only true friends of the Church and the State, we cannot forget that a handful of men in the House of Commons resolutely declared themselves against such a system, and that the results were more than unfavourable to the Established Church, as well as to that portion of the State which had hoped, in this free country, to bend the public opinion to the will of the Church, and to force upon the nation such views of doctrine as are not far removed from those which are fashionable in certain quarters at the present time. I think it is impossible to read the History of the Long Parliament, by May—the different writings of Prynne—the Life and Times of Baxter—the Memoirs of Colonel Hutchinson, and the several works recently reprinted by Mr. Baron Maseres, without being irresistibly conducted to the conclusion, that the civil wars of that eventful period were mainly referable to a struggle on the part of the Protestant population of this country, for the Religion of the Reformation; and that whatever political considerations were eventually mixed up with that question—still, that in its origin and progress, it was purely a contest between spiritual light and darkness, and between the independence which English Protestants must claim in spite of the pretensions of any Ecclesiastical Establishment, and the effort on the part of that Establishment to lord it over the consciences of men, and to introduce the exploded errors of the Church of Rome. It is almost impossible, I think, to doubt that but for the arduous struggle which then arose, we should have lost the religious and civil liberties for which a former age had contended so earnestly, and with them, perhaps, the very profession of the Protestant faith itself. In saying

this, I am as far from vindicating the absurdity and wickedness of the military tyranny which was set up by that arch-hypocrite, Cromwell, and which terminated in the death of the King, as I should be from admiring the high-churchmanship and egregious folly of that unhappy Monarch's advisers, which first payed the way for those events which all must deplore. It is a foul slander which is cast upon the first opposers of the growing power of a half Popish Church, when they are charged with all the subsequent miseries which arose in consequence of the appeal to which they were driven, by a Church which was gradually renouncing her first faith and her first love, and rapidly hastening into the arms of the corrupt and unscriptural Church, from which she had originally separated. Let the chosen few who ostensibly superintend the business of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and who take sweet counsel with others who do not appear as ostensibly in the proceedings of that Society, take care that they do not at this time commit some such blunders as all their subsequent care will never rectify. Their zeal for what they consider the Church of England, can only be really useful as it is founded on a knowledge of what that Church is, and what it is not, and as it springs from a real concern for the souls of men and the interests of the world. The secular views which would serve the Church as a question of party, and advance her cause as a matter of policy, will, if persisted in, work their own destruction; and it is impossible to look at the conduct of the leading Members of the Bartlett's Buildings Society of late years, and not to fear that their very extraordinary proceedings must be referred to some such source.*

I am, &c.

* "There be some rash people (says Sir MATTHEW HALE) that will presently unchurch all who are not under Episcopal govern-

LETTER VIII.

DEAR SIR,

IT has been a main object in these Letters, to point out the connexion subsisting between the Church and the State, as productive of dangerous consequences to the interests of vital and practical Religion. I apprehend, the assumption of the Magisterial office and duties by the Clergy of the Established Church, is also particularly injurious and mischievous to the Church of England as a body—to those Clergymen individually—to their neglected flocks—and to the nation at large.

It is an indisputable fact that we have a large proportion of that body actually engaged in licensing and transferring those very public-houses, which are one great source of the various miseries deplored by every honest man. Can any person look at the late Police Report, and observe the way

“ment; and if they see a man otherwise of orthodox principles, and
 “of a pious and religious life, yet, if scrupling some points of
 “Ecclesiastical government, though peaceable, they will esteem
 “him little better than a Heathen or Publican, a Schismatic, Heretic,
 “and what not: on the other side, if they see a man of great fervour
 “in asserting the Ecclesiastical government, and observant of
 “external ceremonies, though otherwise of a loose and dissolute
 “life, yet they will be ready to applaud him with the style of a Son
 “of the Church, and upon that account overlook the miscarriages
 “of his life, AS IF THE ESSENCE AND LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION
 “LAY IN THE BARE ASSERTING OF THE BEST FORM OF ECCLESIASTICAL
 “GOVERNMENT.”—Vol. i. p. 297. edit. 1815.

in which metropolitan Clergymen have (in the capacity of licensing Magistrates) been shown to have been connected with Brewers and Distillers, and influenced by the friends of publicans—or can any man consider what is going on through the country at large, on the part of the Clergy, with reference to the subject of licensing in particular, and not conclude that there has been a deplorable want of that moral feeling which we should most naturally expect to find in the authorized guardians of public morals? So far from the Clergy taking any part whatever in this dirty work, they should all be engaged in a very different way, and their own proper and legitimate sphere of action is the discharge of Ecclesiastical, and not of Civil functions. If there should be any weight in this observation, it will follow, that so far from the Clergy being more actively engaged than they are in legal and magisterial duties, they should leave such matters to those whose proper business it is, and employ their time in attending more entirely to the important and awful charge which they have taken upon them. The learned Beza, in commenting upon these words of Scripture, “Who made me a judge or a divider over you?” observes, “Christ would not be a judge, that he might distinguish the civil government from the ecclesiastical.” Dr. M. Macqueen, in reply to the inquiries of the Board of Agriculture (1817) observes, “The Magistracy ought to be confined chiefly, if not entirely, to the Country Gentlemen, to the absolute exclusion of the Clergy. It is my opinion that the ecclesiastical and civil functions should always be kept separate, as by their union on great and small occasions, confusion and mischief have too frequently been the result.”

The late Duke of Richmond was so impressed with the correctness of this opinion, that he would never give his sanction to a single Clergyman becoming a Magistrate in the county of Sussex, of which he was Lord Lieutenant, and I believe the present Duke acts upon the same prin-

ciple. Indeed, the opposite opinion can only be founded upon an inadequate sense of the solemn responsibility of the clerical office, and of the serious duties which it involves. It is easy to see, that any one who merely looks to that office in a professional point of view, as an occupation by which subsistence may be obtained, will collect without difficulty a variety of reasons to shew that magisterial and ministerial duties are perfectly compatible with each other; but they who consider that the mere public duties of the Sunday form by no means the largest demands of a parish on their pastor, and that those duties are in many cases comparatively the least,—they who remember that the sick are to be visited, and the dying consoled, that the poor are to be relieved, the naked clothed, the ignorant instructed, the profligate admonished, on every day of the week, as well as on the seventh—such persons will see that he who would attend to his spiritual duties will have very little time left for attention to secular pursuits.* Nor is this all; a Clergyman who is in earnest, not only wants the time for business of this kind, but his office is degraded, and his influence in higher matters is diminished by such an inconsistent interference in the concerns of the world. Is it creditable, for instance, to the official or personal character

* See the examination of the Rev. Edward Robson by the House of Commons, in the Police Report, 1817.

“As I happen to live within half a dozen doors of Whitechapel-office, I go in almost every day, and have done ever since I have been a Magistrate, which is eleven years.

“Q. You give your assistance to that office almost daily?—A. If there be any necessity; I am there merely as a loungee, more than any thing else; but if any one of the Magistrates happens to be out of the way, or any thing occurs in which I can be of use, I give my assistance.

“Q. Do you attend on the licensing day?—A. Yes.

“Q. Have you so done for some time past?—A. Yes, ever since I was a Magistrate.” Will this Gentleman permit a plain question from the Bible, “Who hath required this at your hands?”

of a Clergyman, that he should be mixed up with questions of bastardy and rape, with licences and transfers of public houses and dram shops, with applications from brewers, distillers, victuallers, and the very refuse of society.* Is it decent, that when he should be employed in the higher acts of piety and charity, which are more peculiarly within his province, he should be sitting on the Bench to try an indictment for a nuisance, hearing the disgusting evidence adduced against the keeper of an infamous house, or listening to the arguments of Counsel for and against such a prosecution? who, as Junius says, "are paid for the indiscriminate defence of right and wrong." Is it consistent, that when he ought to be preparing himself for his public duties on the Sabbath, he should be furnishing warrants, signing informations, and sanctioning appeals against the settlement of an unfortunate pauper, or the amount of a parochial rate? Are the boundaries of a district, and the due width, or proper repair, of a turnpike road, fit subjects for the serious occupation of men who are presumed to be training and elevating their fellow-creatures for eternity? Do the mixed convivial meetings which frequently follow these magisterial occupations, derogate in no way from the honour, respectability and usefulness of the clerical character? Are reverend personages never found involved in the struggles of a county election, and the feuds which inevitably ensue?—and have stalls in cathedrals been in no instance the remuneration for such unworthy services? Does the active part which many of the clergy are led to take in the politics of the day, never affect their tempers, alienate those of their congrega-

* "In September there are such Petitions and Counter-Petitions; it is troublesome beyond measure; there is such grumbling and grudging, and heart-breaking; persons who think they can make any interest are doing it. I have been astonished by the applications I have had made to me."—*Examination of the Rev. Edward Robson.*

tions who think differently from them, and hinder the advantage which would otherwise accrue from their labours? "Politics and the Pulpit," says Burke, "are terms that have little agreement. The cause of civil liberty and civil government gains as little as that of religion by this confusion of duties. Those who quit their proper character to assume what does not belong to them, are for the greater part ignorant both of the character they leave, and of the character they assume,—wholly unacquainted with the world, in which they are so fond of meddling,—and inexperienced in all its affairs, on which they pronounce with so much confidence; they have nothing of politics but the passions they excite."

It is not meant to be disputed by me, that in some instances good has resulted from the Clergy exercising the functions of the Civil Magistrate; but the question here is, whether their exercise of the civil functions has not upon the whole been productive of so much evil to themselves and their people, as to leave it far more desirable that they should move in their proper province? It appears to me, that both the Church and the State would be infinitely better served, if the Clergy were to resolve no longer to secularize their order, but to stand aloof even from the suspicion of unhallowed motives, and resolve that their occupations should be "unmix'd with baser matter."—Certain instances which have been before the public of interference on the part of the Established Clergy with certain individuals among the Laity, who have presumed to pray, and, for aught I know, to preach in their own houses, appear to manifest undue apprehension lest such unlettered personages, as are without benefit of Clergy, should presume to meddle with subjects which they cannot be supposed to understand, and to usurp such functions as they must needs be supposed incapable of exercising. All this supposes danger, and if the Church really be in danger from more than twenty of a man's friends meeting together to worship God in his own house, it is

doubtless very right that an obsolete statute against such temerity should be now revived and enforced; but it is surely not too much to expect, that when the Laity are thus made to keep their place, the Clergy should also keep theirs; and that if we are to have no praying Gentlemen, so we should have no secular Clergymen.

Let it not, however, be for a moment imagined from any thing that has been advanced, that I do not entertain a deep sense of the value and importance of an active and resident Clergy. It is simply with a view to the real efficiency and utility of that body, that I would wish to see them engaged in services of another nature, and avoiding the petty cabals and low intrigues which are inseparable from the desecration of their office. To be respected and beloved, they must be found in their proper element. If they are wise, they will be so far from desiring to add to their official burdens, that they will even feel anxious to be released from such work as can only degrade them in the eyes of others, and swallow up that time which might be far more profitably employed.

I am, &c.

LETTER IX.

DEAR SIR,

I HAVE been carried by my subject somewhat beyond the strict bounds to which I had proposed to confine myself; but it may not be without its use to have shewn that the inactivity in the cause of Truth which is displayed by some Members of the Establishment, and the actual opposition to Truth which is manifested by others, are

equally referable to the deteriorating secularity which the Church has contracted in consequence of her alliance with the Temporal state;—an alliance, however, to which, in this country at least, we must not look for the preservation of the Church, as an Establishment, for any very long period after she shall have become manifestly corrupt, either in doctrine, or practice, or both. It is too much to expect, that this proposition will be understood by all persons, and it is but too evident, (however the fact may be deplored,) that it will excite a feeling nearly approaching to resentment, in quarters where it is not understood. It may not, however, be less true on that account. It is quite of course that the enemies of the Missionary and Bible Societies will never allow themselves to be the foes of Real Religion and of a Scriptural Church, until they come to see with other eyes, any more than St. Paul, or the Scribes and Pharisees, would have made a similar admission, while in their natural state; but such persons as are not yet ranged under the banners of a professed orthodoxy, and are as yet maintaining neutrality on the question, may perhaps be led to consider it with seriousness; and I apprehend that, with the Bible in their hands, they must needs tremble at the wickedness and folly of resisting the light of truth themselves, and of excluding its rays from the whole heathen world, yet “lying in the wicked one.” With any spiritual man, who can say, “One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see;” all mere arguments of spiritual authority, as claimed and exercised by his fellow-men, fall to the ground at once, when they are clean contrary to an express Revelation from Heaven. This independence of spirit, which strengthened the martyrs at the stake, may be called contumacy and presumption by certain Protestant Priests of our own time, as it was and is by all the Romish Priests of every time; it may not only excite their contempt, but, when they have the power, may provoke their vengeance; these consequences, however, will not deter or divert him from the paramount duty of circu-

lating the Scriptures of Truth, and enlightening a world which lies in darkness. When he is put to choose between the word of God and the word of man, he will not long be hesitating in his choice. Let not our Ecclesiastical or Temporal Rulers be deceived—the light which has been diffused through this country, mainly by the instrumentality of those very Societies which excite the scorn and hatred of a worldly Clergy, is of such a nature, that any attempts to extinguish it, which may be of a more decided character than we have already witnessed, are only likely to recoil with an overwhelming reaction on their authors.

It is with a sincere desire that such evils may be avoided, that I conjure the opponents of the Church Missionary and Bible Societies to pause, and to be wise in time; but more especially those opponents who, after the most humiliating defeats in argument, are meditating measures of another description. The Archdeacon's partisan at Bristol, who publicly presented him with a piece of plate in token of his approbation, and the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Frome, who voted him their unanimous thanks for the insult offered to a Christian Bishop, and the scandal put upon their own Church, must not be regarded as indicating the feelings of other individuals, or conveying the sense of the Church at large, upon conduct of so offensive and mischievous a description. As little must the party spirit which has been stirred up, and still ferments in the Archdeacon's favour amongst multitudes who, under the external profession of Religion, are any thing else than religious themselves, be admitted as any evidence of the sentiments of the country at large, in favour of his view of the subject: if, however, the Archdeacon can shew himself in possession of a numerical majority, he will be still as far as ever from proving the correctness of his own opinion, unless he can at the same time shew, that Truth depends upon numbers, and that the broad way is a better way than the narrow one, because of the multitudes

who walk in it. There never was a Church on earth to which there was not attached a vast number of persons, who permit their Ecclesiastical Rulers to think for them, and to direct them in all questions of Religion; although it was precisely against all usurpations over conscience, that the Reformation and the Revolution, alike, erected those standards, under which our Ancestors fought and conquered. With the disciples of such a School, the late dictum of the Archdeacon, against the Church Missionary Society, as well as the correspondent decisions of certain Prelates against the Bible Society, have all the force of a Revelation from Heaven. The last inquiry such persons ever think of making, is, whether the opinions of their Ecclesiastical superiors can shew any warrant from Scripture; let them only be satisfied that such Reverend personages consider the Church in danger, and they will join in the cry against all whom they are bid to denounce. It never once occurs to them, that the accredited heads of a visible Church can possibly fall into error themselves, or lead others into it; and those accredited heads are, in their turn, sufficiently aware of the operation of this principle in their favour, to reckon absolutely upon its influence; and they accordingly rest more upon authority than argument, and depend far more upon the power of numbers, than on the validity of reasoning: they are thus wiser in their generation than the children of light: the bulk of unconverted men, naturally range themselves on their side, in all contests between light and darkness; and the preponderance of secular power is thus in favour of the opponents of divine Truth. Let any person observe the results which have followed the late Protest, on the part of the unregenerate, and he will see the truth of this remark fully exemplified. Almost all such persons, to a man, are openly justifying the Archdeacon's appeal, on the score of an undue interference of one Bishop in the diocese of another—let them be shaken out of the untenableness of this argument, and they then contend, with the

Archdeacon, that the Missionary Society itself was unnecessary—let this be shewn to be entirely erroneous, and they argue that if Missions were wanted, *Sectaries* and *Schismatics* were not—in other words, being as profoundly ignorant of the evil of sin, and the value of the soul, as their Spiritual guides, they can no more comprehend than they do, that passage of Scripture which declares, that “there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety, and nine just persons which need no repentance.”—They can understand no better that Psalm which is introduced into the evening service of their own Liturgy, in which David prays that the way of God may be known *upon earth*—his saving health AMONG ALL NATIONS; that the people may praise him, YEA, THAT ALL THE PEOPLE may praise him—in which he further prays that *the nations* may rejoice and be glad, (which can never be while they continue immersed in the lust and bloodshed of Idolatry,) and in which he concludes with a positive prophecy, that ALL THE ENDS OF THE WORLD SHALL FEAR GOD.

These persons are equally ignorant of the meaning of the prayer for “*all conditions of men*,” which they repeat every time they attend the service of their own Church, in which that Divine Personage, who is emphatically and sublimely designated as “the Creator and Preserver of ALL MANKIND,” is earnestly entreated for “*all sorts and conditions of men*,” that he would be pleased to make his ways known unto them—his saving health UNTO ALL NATIONS;—after the use of which prayer, it is surely no better than rank hypocrisy, and no other than a solemn mockery, to protest against the Church Missionary Society, and to stigmatize its object, and its supporters, as sectarian and schismatical. As little do such opponents comprehend the import of that prayer in the Liturgy appointed to be used every day in the Ember weeks, in which it is sought, that to those who shall be ordained to any holy function, the grace and benediction of the Almighty may be given,

that by their life and doctrine, they may set forth his glory, and "SET FORWARD THE SALVATION OF ALL MEN." As little, again, do such objectors enter into the spirit of their own Collect for Good Friday, in which the Almighty is addressed as a merciful God, who made ALL MEN, and hates nothing that he has made, and desires not the death of A SINNER, but rather that he should BE CONVERTED AND LIVE—and who is then entreated to have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, INFIDELS and Heretics, and to take from them all IGNORANCE, HARDNESS OF HEART, and CONTEMPT OF HIS WORD, and so to fetch them home to his flock, that they may be made ONE FOLD UNDER ONE SHEPHERD—Jesus Christ. It is painful to dwell on these inconsistencies, and to reiterate these charges; but let the nation judge whether such statements could have been suppressed, or withheld, without injury to the cause of Truth, and whether they have not been rendered absolutely necessary by the perverseness of those who have recently advanced into the front of the Army of the Philistines, and have defied the Armies of the living God.

In conclusion—I do again (as anxiously deprecating further hostilities, and sincerely desirous that some persons may see their own folly before it be too late) earnestly conjure them to reflect on the inevitable consequences of any less equivocal, and more violent measures; in respect of those whom they already brand with opprobrious names, and to whom they do not scruple to impute the most unworthy designs. Already are the pulpits of the Establishment too generally closed, as by common consent, against those who are termed Evangelical Ministers. Already has Episcopal Ordination been expressly refused to many of this class, some of whom, however, have been distinguished for the strength of their talents, the extent of their acquirements, and the holiness of their lives.

Already has episcopal persecution, in a mitigated form; vexed and harassed, suspended and silenced, many of the Established Clergy, whose only fault has been, that they

have boldly maintained the distinguishing doctrines of the Gospel, and determined (with the Apostle) to know nothing save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.* More than this could not have been plausibly attempted, until some public movement on the part of those in authority (the Archdeacon and his patrons for instance) should have more or less driven the Church and the world into two distinct parties, and sounded the alarm of war through their respective ranks. We have lived to see the arrival of that period, and neutrality appears no longer practicable, even if it could be shewn to be desirable. What may be the issue of these events is only known to Him who knoweth all things. Of this, however, we may be assured—that his own Church is founded on a rock, and that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. If they who read and love their Bibles should ever, by any fatal errors on the part of their Ecclesiastical Rulers, be put to choose between adherence to the visible, and the invisible Church, they cannot hesitate for an instant which to prefer. May no such alternative be unwisely forced upon their choice. In the mean time—may they who direct the helm of the State, deem it not beneath their notice to reflect a little on one of the most interesting periods of English history, and condescend to listen to the testimony of one who, although a Dissenter from the Establishment, was honoured by the offer of a Bishoprick, which he as honourably refused; and who was at once the most laborious writer, and the most pious Divine of his times. I need hardly name the distinguished RICHARD BAXTER. In adverting to the causes of the Civil Wars, he observes—“I cannot perceive

* On this point let Lord BACON be heard again—“As for their easy silencing of them—In such great scarcity of preachers, it is to PUNISH THE PEOPLE, AND NOT THEM. Ought not the Bishops to keep one eye open, to look upon the good that these men do, not to fix them both upon the hurt that they suppose cometh by them?”

“but that we undertook our defence upon warrantable
 “grounds; so am I most certain that God hath won-
 “derfully appeared through the whole. And as I
 “am certain by sight and sense, that the extirpation
 “of piety was the then great design,* which had so far
 “succeeded; that very many of the most able Ministers
 “were silenced, Lectures and Evening Sermons on the
 “Lord’s Day suppressed, Christians imprisoned, dismem-
 “bered and banished; the Lord’s Day reproached, and
 “devoted to Pastimes; that it was as much as a man’s
 “estate at least was worth, to hear a Sermon abroad, when
 “he had none (or worse) at home; to meet for Prayer, or
 “any godly exercise; and that it was a matter of credit,
 “and a way to preferment, to revile at and be enemies
 “against those that were most conscientious; and every
 “where safer to be a Drunkard or an Adulterer, than a
 “painful Christian; and that multitudes of human cere-
 “monies took place, when the worship of Christ’s institu-
 “tion was cast out, (besides the slavery that invaded us in
 “civil respects,) so am I most certain, that this was the
 “work which we took up arms to resist; and these were
 “the offenders whom we endeavoured to offend. And
 “many of those that scruple the lawfulness of our war, did
 “never scruple the lawfulness of destroying us, nor of that
 “doleful havock and subversion that was made in the

* “I desire the reader to peruse the articles of accusation
 “brought into the Parliament against Bishop Wren, Bishop Pierce,
 “Laud, with the rest of the Bishops, that we may not forget what
 “a case we were in. I should be a flatterer of the times past, if I
 “should take upon me to justify or approve of all the carriages of
 “some, that have been entrusted with the Keys of Ecclesiastical
 “Government: or to blanch over the corruptions of Consistorial
 “Officers. In both these there was fault enough to ground both a
 “Complaint and Reformation. And may that man never prosper,
 “that desires not a happy Reformation of whatsoever hath been or is
 “amiss in the Church of God.”—*Bishop Hall in his Modest Offer to
 the Assembly*, page 3.

“ Churches of Christ among us ; though now, perhaps, they
 “ will acknowledge some of our persecutors’ miscarriages.
 “ The fault was, that we would not die quietly ; nor lay
 “ down our necks more gently on the block ; nor more
 “ willingly change the Gospel for Ignorance, and our Reli-
 “ gion for a burden of Ceremonies ; nor betray the hopes
 “ of Posterity to their wills. As Dalilah by Sampson, so do
 “ they by us : They accuse us, that we do not love them,
 “ because we will not deliver up our strength, that they
 “ may put out our eyes. Yet I desire none so far to
 “ mistake me, as to think I speak of all that were of the
 “ adverse party. I doubt not but many ingenuous and
 “ civil Gentlemen, and learned and pious Divines, went
 “ that way, that had no malignant hatred to Piety ;
 “ whom I think no modest man should term Malignants.
 “ And I know yet more judicious men were against the
 “ War on both sides. I would all had been so, but when
 “ all would not, there was no remedy ; some imposed a
 “ necessity on those that would fain have avoided it. Yet
 “ (though it be my most earnest daily Prayer, that God
 “ would convince me, if I have erred in this, and I have
 “ used all probable means for information,) it is not my
 “ intent to determine which party was in the right : I
 “ never knew men go far in a quarrel, but both parties
 “ were to blame, more or less. And upon the most serious
 “ review of mine own and other men’s proceedings, I
 “ unfeignedly repent that we were not more zealous and
 “ studious for Peace, and for the lenifying of exasperated
 “ and exulcerated minds, and had not a deeper detestation
 “ of War ; (but who then knew what it was ?) And it
 “ unfeignedly grieves me, that there yet remains such a
 “ distance in men’s affections, and they still look on each
 “ other as enemies, and that there have been no more effec-
 “ tual reconciling endeavours, especially in matters of
 “ religion : (where I think, if it were well followed, it
 “ might well be accomplished, the difference lying in so
 “ narrow a room :) But yet this I am sure of, that who-

“ever were in the right or wrong, there appeared more
 “of Christ’s Interest on one side than on the other; as
 “in the first occasion, so in the prosecution. Though
 “some that ruled might have better ends: yet we can-
 “not choose but know, that as it was the most notorious
 “persons for wickedness that made up the multitude; so
 “the very deadly implacable hatred to Godliness, was it
 “that then stirred them up, as a nest of wasps; and a
 “man that was more devout and pious than the multitude,
 “could not live by them in most places, but were forced
 “into garrisons and arms to save their lives, who would
 “else have sat still; so that the first rage of the Prelates,
 “in silencing as learned able Ministers, and incessantly
 “persecuting as Godly Christians as the world enjoyed,
 “was now encreased a hundred fold. Those that are mo-
 “derate of that party, do confess this to be true, and
 “that it was the cause of their ruin. It was his own
 “people, therefore, that Christ was tender of, and his
 “own interest that he stood up for, against the fierceness of
 “the ungodly multitude. And the name that he hath
 “got himself in the defence of his interest, I dare not
 “obscure, nor eclipse the Glory of his Providences which I
 “have seen, nor take down the monuments and trophies of
 “his Praise, whatever the miscarriages of instruments may
 “be, before, or in, or since that work.”

There occurs, also, in the “Life and Times” of
 BAXTER, so important a passage on the same subject, and
 one which, in many of its parts, has so remarkable an
 application to some of the signs of our own times, that
 I cannot forbear to extract it, notwithstanding its length.
 “Though it must be confessed, that the public safety and
 “liberty wrought very much with most, especially with
 “the Nobility and Gentry, who adhered to the Parlia-
 “ment, yet was it principally the differences about Re-
 “ligious matters that filled up the Parliament’s armies, and
 “put the resolution and valour into their soldiers, which
 “carried them on in another manner, than mercenary

"soldiers are carried on. Not that the matter of Bishops,
 "or no Bishops, was the main thing, (for thousands that
 "wished for good Bishops were on the Parliament's side,)
 "but the generality of the People through the Land,
 "(I say not all, or every one,) who were then called
 "Puritans, Precisians, Religious Persons, that used to talk
 "of God, and Heaven, and Scripture, and Holiness, and
 "to follow Sermons, and read Books of Devotion, and
 "pray in their Families, and spend the Lord's Day in
 "Religious Exercises, and plead for Mortification, and
 "serious Devotion, and strict obedience to God, and speak
 "against swearing, cursing, drunkenness, prophaneness, &c.
 "I say, the main body of this sort of men, both Preachers
 "and People, adhered to the Parliament. And on the
 "other side, the Gentry that were not so precise and strict
 "against an Oath, or Gaming, or Plays, or Drinking, nor
 "troubled themselves so much about the matters of God
 "and the world to come, and the Ministers and People that
 "were for the King's Book for Dancing and Recreations
 "on the Lord's Day; and those that made not so great a
 "matter of every sin, but went to Church and heard
 "Common Prayer, and were glad to hear a Sermon which
 "lashed the Puritans, and which ordinarily spoke against
 "this strictness and preciseness in Religion, and this strict
 "observation of the Lord's Day, and following Sermons,
 "and praying extempore, and talking so much of Scripture
 "and the matters of Salvation, and those that hated and
 "derided them that take these courses, the main body of
 "these were against the Parliament.

"If you ask how this came to pass, it requireth a
 "longer answer than I think fit here to give: But briefly—
 "Actions spring from natural dispositions and interest.
 "There is somewhat in the nature of all worldly men,
 "which maketh them earnestly desirous of riches and
 "honors in the world; and they that value them most
 "will seek them; and they that seek them, are more like
 "to find them than those that despise them; and he that

"taketh the world and preferment for his interest, will
 "estimate and choose all means accordingly; and where
 "the world is predominant, gain goeth for Godliness, and
 "serious Religion, which would mortify their sin, is their
 "greatest enemy: yet conscience must be quieted, and
 "reputation preserved, which can neither of them be done,
 "without some Religion. Therefore such a Religion is
 "necessary to such as is consistent with a worldly mind;
 "which outside formality, lip service, and hypocrisy is;
 "but seriousness, sincerity, and spirituality is not.

"On the other side, there is that in the new nature of a
 "spiritual Believer, which inclineth him to things above,
 "and causeth him to look at worldly grandeur and riches,
 "as things more dangerous than desirable; and he is dead
 "to the world, and the world to him, by the Cross of Christ;
 "no wonder therefore if few such attain great matters in the
 "world, or ever come to preferment or greatness upon
 "earth, and there is somewhat in them which maketh them
 "more fearful of displeasing God, than all the world, and
 "will not give them leave to stretch their consciences, or
 "turn aside when the interest, or will of man requireth it:
 "And the laws of Christ, to which they are so devoted, are
 "of such a stream as cannot suit with carnal interest.
 "There is an universal and radicated enmity between the
 "carnal and the spiritual, the Serpent's and the Woman's
 "seed, the fleshly mind, and the spiritual Law of God,
 "through all the world, in all generations, Gen. iii. 15.
 "Rom. viii. 6, 7, 8. Thus enmity is found in England,
 "as well as in other Countries, between the Godly and
 "the worldly minds; as he that was born after the Flesh
 "did persecute him that was born after the Spirit, even so
 "was it here: The vulgar rabble of the carnal and prophane,
 "the Fornicators, Drunkards, Swearers, &c. did every
 "where hate them that reproved their Sin, and condemned
 "them by a holy life. This difference was universal, and
 "their enmity implacable, farther than common grace
 "abated it, or special grace cured it. So that every where

“ serious, godly people, that would not run with others to
 “ excess of Riot, were spoken against, and derided by the
 “ names of Precisian, Zealot, Overstrict, the Holy Bre-
 “ thren, and other terms of scorn.

“ These things being supposed, it unhappily fell out
 “ that in the days of Queen Mary (that we may fetch
 “ the matter ab origine) our Reformers, being Fugitives at
 “ Frankfort, fell into a Division : One part of them were
 “ for Diocesans, and the English Liturgy and Ceremonies,
 “ that they might no more than needs depart from the
 “ Papists, nor seem inconstant by departing from what
 “ King Edward had begun. The other were for Calvin’s
 “ discipline, and way of worship; for the setting up of
 “ a Parochial Discipline instead of a Diocesan; and to
 “ have a Government in every particular Church, and
 “ not only One over a Thousand, or many Hundred
 “ Churches : and for a plain and serious way of worship,
 “ suited as near as possible to God’s word.

“ When these two parties returned into England, the
 “ Diocesan party got Queen Elizabeth’s countenance, and
 “ were preferred, and their way set up. The other party
 “ petitioned, and hoped, and waited, but were discounte-
 “ nanced, rebuked, and by law suppressed. This lamentable
 “ breach was never healed : The discountenanced party
 “ were fervent preachers, of holy Lives, and so were many
 “ of the Bishops also in those days ! But if those that suc-
 “ ceeded them had been as holy and as diligent Preachers,
 “ they had kept up their honour and places without such
 “ assaults as they have undergone. But when Jewell,
 “ Pilkington, Grindall, and such like were dead, many
 “ succeeded them whom the people took to be other kind
 “ of men. And the silenced Disciplinarians (as then they
 “ were called) did by their writings, their secret conference,
 “ and preaching, and their godly lives, work much upon
 “ such as were religiously addicted. And moreover,
 “ besides what they received from such teachers, there
 “ is (I know not perfectly whence) among the most of

“ the religious serious People of these countries a suspicion
 “ of all that is ceremonious in God’s service, and of all
 “ which they find not warrant for in Scripture; and a
 “ greater inclination to a rational convincing earnest way
 “ of preaching and prayers, than to the written forms
 “ of words which are to be read in Churches. And they
 “ are greatly taken with a Preacher that speaketh to them
 “ in a familiar natural language, and exhorteth them as if
 “ it were for their lives; when another that readeth, or saith
 “ a few composed words in a reading tone, they hear almost
 “ as a Boy that is saying his lesson: And they are much
 “ persuaded that a just Parochial discipline would greatly
 “ reform the Church, and that Diocesans, by excluding it,
 “ cherish Vice.

“ Now upon the difference between the Diocesans and the
 “ Disciplinarians, the Diocesans found that their very places
 “ and power and lands and lordships were assaulted by the
 “ contrary opinion, and therefore they thought it necessary
 “ to suppress the Promoters of it. And so putting Episco-
 “ pacy, Liturgy, Ceremonies, and all into the Subscrip-
 “ tions which they imposed on all that would be Ministers
 “ or Schoolmasters, they kept and cast out very many
 “ worthy men. For some that were for Liturgy and Cere-
 “ monies, were not for Diocesans, but for Parish Disci-
 “ pline; and some that were for Bishops, were not for the
 “ Ceremonies; and some that were for the rest, yet scrupled
 “ some one, and he that could not subscribe to all, was
 “ forbidden to preach the Gospel; whereas, in the mean
 “ time, many Bishops preached very seldom, and abun-
 “ dance of places had ignorant Readers that could not
 “ preach, and silly Preachers, whose performances were so
 “ mean, that they had better have kept to the reading of
 “ the Homilies; and many of these were of scandalous
 “ lives.

“ Hereupon the Disciplinarians cried out of the ignorant
 “ scandalous Ministers; and almost all the scandalous
 “ Ministers (and all that studied preferment) cried out of

"the Nonconformists. The name of Puritan was put
 "upon them, and by that they were commonly known:
 "when they had been called by that name awhile, the
 "vicious multitude of the ungodly called all Puritans that
 "were strict and serious in a Holy Life, were they ever so
 "conformable. So that the same name in a Bishop's
 "mouth, signified a Nonconformist; and in an ignorant
 "Drunkard's or Swearer's mouth, a godly obedient
 "Christian. But the People, being the greater number;
 "became among themselves the masters of the sense. Now
 "the ignorant rabble, hearing that the Bishops were against
 "the Puritans, (not having wit enough to know whom
 "they meant,) were emboldened the more against all those
 "whom they called Puritans themselves, and their rage
 "against the godly was increased: and they cried up the
 "Bishops, partly because they were against the Puritans,
 "and partly because they were earnest for that way of
 "worship which they found most consistent with their igno-
 "rance, carelessness and sins. And thus the interest of the
 "Diocesans, and of the prophane and ignorant sort of people,
 "were unhappily twisted together in England.

"And, indeed, this unhappy complication of the in-
 "terest of prelacy, and prophaneness, and opposition of
 "the interest of prelacy to the temper of the generality of
 "the religious party, was the visible cause of the overthrow
 "of the King in the eye of all the understanding world,
 "that ever was capable of observing it."

I conclude by humbly offering a simple but important
 piece of advice to our Rulers both in the Church and
 State, although entirely opposite in its nature and tendency
 to other advice which has been recently given them by the
 Rev. Richard Lloyd, from whom, as the Minister of a
 Gospel of peace, the world might indeed have expected
 far other and very different counsel, than that with which
 he has favoured his Ecclesiastical and Civil Superiors;—the
 advice which I would give is, indeed, as old as the Apostolic
 age; but I am persuaded, that while many Churchmen in our

own times will not deem it less valuable on account of its antiquity, it will present no meaner claims to their attention from the circumstance of its having been the advice of "a Doctor of the Law, had in reputation among all the people." His advice, then, and mine is,—**"REFRAIN FROM THESE MEN, AND LET THEM ALONE: FOR IF THIS COUNSEL OR THIS WORK BE OF MEN, IT WILL COME TO NOUGHT; BUT IF IT BE OF GOD, YE CAN NOT OVERTHROW IT; LEST HAPLY YE BE FOUND EVEN TO FIGHT AGAINST GOD."**

I am, &c.